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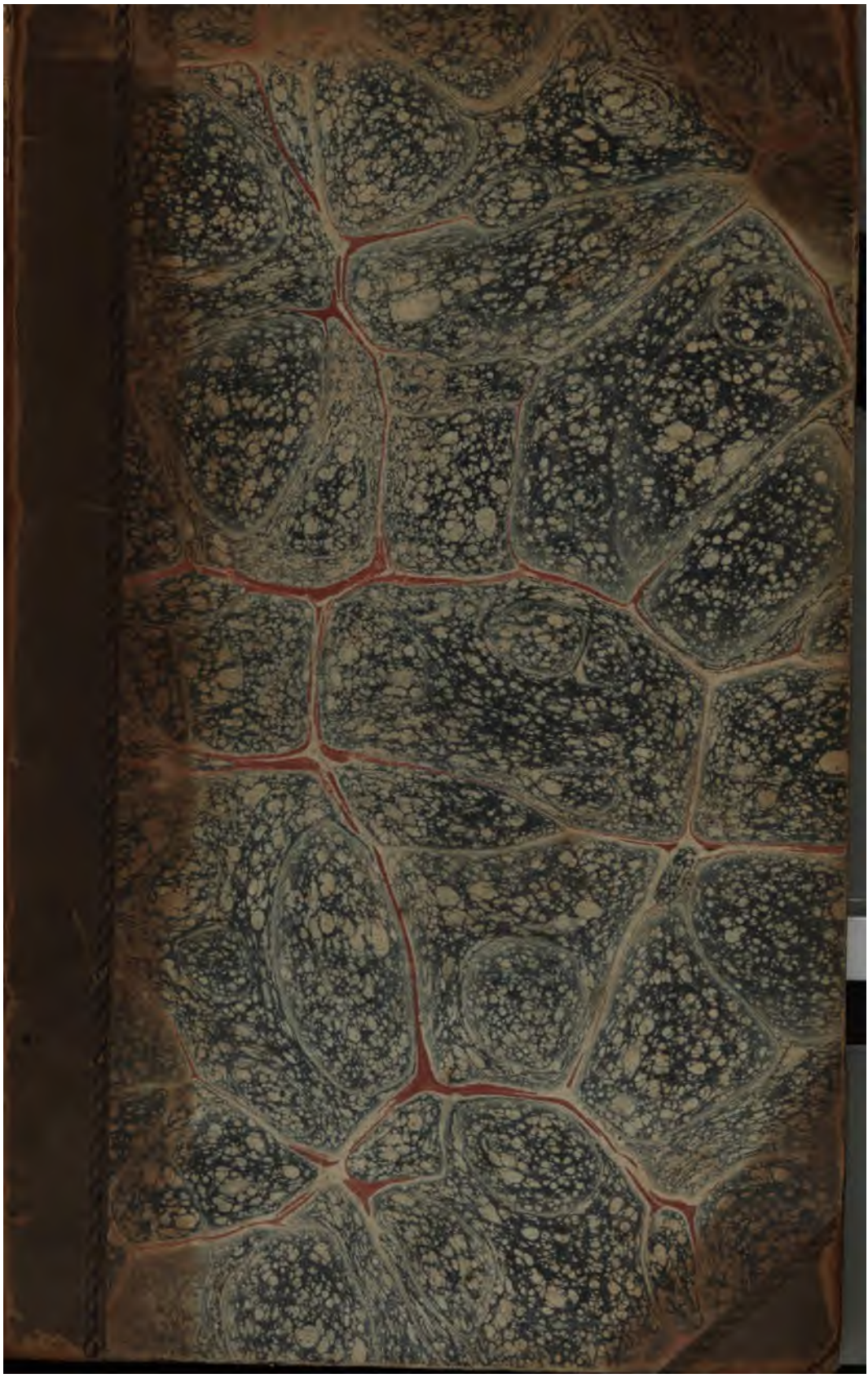

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MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

ON VARIOUS RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

BEING THE LAST REMAINS OF

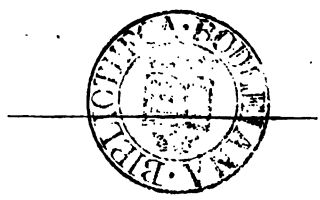
THE REV. ANDREW FULLER.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED,

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES,

BY J. W. MORRIS.

INTENDED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO HIS MEMOIRS OF THE AUTHOR.



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125 23, *dele* the word of
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208 6, for difference *read* diffidence
— 7, for Review *read* Reviewer
252 3, bottom, for consider *read* reconsider
314 5, bottom, *dele* the word the

PREFACE.

It can scarcely be expected that the occasional papers of any writer, however eminent, would hold an equal rank with his ostensible and more elaborate performances, which, besides the superior care bestowed upon their composition, are generally on subjects of more permanent importance. Yet as these ephemeral productions tend to display the literary history and diversified talents of their author, and incidentally exhibit the religious sentiments and peculiar tact of cotemporary characters, they are found to possess a high degree of interest, and provide for the curious and inquisitive a greater variety of amusement and instruction.

The miscellaneous effusions of Mr. Fuller's pen were extremely numerous. In one form or another they appeared successively in nearly all the religious journals of the day, published among dissenters, whose editors were ever solicitous for his assistance; but as they were written at different intervals, during the

space of about thirty years, and during the process of intellectual and literary improvement, they possess of course various degrees of merit. A large proportion of them are in answer to queries on doctrinal or casuistical difficulties, and some few on practical and experimental piety; but in all, the peculiar turn of the writer is sufficiently apparent, and will easily be recognised by those who are conversant with his larger works. Some of them are indeed in the Author's best stile, and display all that discrimination and force of reasoning, for which he was so much distinguished.

The materials which compose the present volume are chiefly derived from a monthly miscellany, published about five and twenty years ago, and of which I was the editor and proprietor. Mr. Fuller took a considerable interest in the work, and wrote a great variety of pieces on purpose for it, most of them at my particular request. These having been printed solely at my expense, ought to have been considered as my exclusive right, though a principal part of them have been added, unceremoniously, to the posthumous volume of the Author's works.

The fugitive pieces were however so numerous, that it was found necessary to conceal the writer under a variety of signatures; several of them of course escaped detection, being known *only* to the author and the editor. But after the lapse of so many years it was found extremely difficult to identify all the papers, either from recollection or from internal evidence, and

some of them must have been consigned to oblivion, had I not accidentally preserved the shorthand originals from which several of them were transcribed for the press, and examined nearly two hundred letters which contained occasional references to those which had appeared, both in my own and in other magazines.

As it is interesting at all times to know the opinion which eminent men entertain of cotemporary writers, I have introduced Mr. Fuller's Review of some treatises by the Rev. Abraham Booth, Rev. Thomas Scott, and the Rev. Charles Jerram, on subjects which engaged very general attention at the time they were published, as well as some others which will be found not a little interesting to the pious and intelligent. To these might have been added, Reviews of several minor publications, the offspring of the day, but which appeared less deserving of a place in this collection.

A few papers have been extracted from other periodical works, which occasionally received Mr. Fuller's contributions, in order to preserve as far as possible the scattered remains of this valuable writer; but several of them, I apprehend, are still left behind, especially in the journals of the north of England.

The only remaining source from whence the present volume has been supplied, are some private letters addressed to myself, or sent to be transcribed, but which were not intended to be printed. On examining these

I found, in addition to what has already appeared in my Memoirs of the Author, a number of sketches too valuable to be lost, and which may with propriety be inserted in the present volume, now that the parties to whom most of them refer are deceased.

The reader may not be aware of the fact which it is now proper for me to state, and which will at once account for the variety of notes and papers left in my possession. It is this. My intimacy with Mr. Fuller continued without interruption for upwards of twenty years, during which we had an unremitting and unreserved intercourse, on every subject connected with the mission, with his numerous publications, and his epistolary correspondence. As his labours began rapidly to multiply, as soon as he was ushered into public life, he felt the need of some assistance; and I became in effect his amanuensis, an office which I filled during the above period, without any other fee or reward than what arises from that friendship which teaches us by love to serve one another. From his shorthand notes I transcribed for the press the greater part of what he intended to publish, all the missionary accounts, most of his controversial letters and other papers, and his correspondence with Scotland, America, and Bengal, making in the whole perhaps not less than fifteen volumes in octavo.

My highly esteemed friend was fully aware of the great demand which these engagements made upon my time, much of which was necessarily devoted to

secular pursuits in aid of a very limited ministerial income, though on my part the unproductive and honorary secretaryship was never a matter of regret. I derived much instruction from this religious and intellectual intercourse, and deemed it a sufficient reward for all my labour. Mr. Fuller had no sinister end to answer, and no pecuniary means to command; but with his repeated acknowledgments of my gratuitous assistance, he tendered that kind of recompense which he knew would be most agreeable to his friend. He allowed me free access to his private manuscripts, and sent me such as tended to facilitate the discharge of my official duties, desiring me to transcribe freely from them for my own use, and also to keep various letters and papers which I had copied at his request. The documentary evidence of this fact is still existing. In short, there was not in my possession a single paragraph but he was acquainted with it, and not one which he did not consider as the only remuneration he had to offer for my assiduity. The papers were indeed of very little use, except in his hands or in mine, as no other individual could be familiar with the circumstances which produced and accompanied their existence; and now that he is gone, I have carefully collected and compiled them as a monument to his memory.

Certain as I was, from what has already been stated, that no other person would be able to identify the various fugitive pieces which had been written, and not at all anxious to avail myself of this exclusive advan-

tage, I made a gratuitous offer of my services to the Compilers of the Author's works, as soon as I heard that a new and uniform edition of them was in contemplation. This offer was declined, and application made in another quarter, which was refused in consequence. The Compilers then made the collection since presented to the public, on their own responsibility.

Some valuable papers of Mr. Fuller's are entirely lost, and more would have shared the same fate, had I not happened to preserve them. During the controversy with Mr. Booth and others, Mr. Fuller wrote Six Letters on the doctrine of Imputation, which I transcribed many years ago at his request; and they were lent from hand to hand, until the copy and the original were both lost. This is mentioned with regret by the author, in a letter dated May 11th 1805. Mr. Fuller also wrote a series of papers on Pulpit Composition, a part only of which is now extant. Three Letters on this subject appear in vol. iv. of his works, and the compilers say they do not know that any more were written. There was however another highly valuable Letter, on the Textual method of division, founded on 1 Peter v. 10, and which I was requested to copy for the use of Dr. Stuart of Edinburgh. This, with several other papers so transmitted, was afterwards lost, or inserted in his Quarterly Magazine, or in some other Scotch publications, where they will be seen no more. Besides these there were some critical Notes

to an original manuscript, communicated by Dr. Hopkins of America, all of which have been lost.

It is also much to be regretted, that in the new edition of the Author's works several valuable publications, which had been printed in his lifetime, are entirely omitted; for though they are not in danger of being lost, it has rendered the edition less perfect than it might have been, and of course less satisfactory to the readers and subscribers.—No reason is assigned for the omission of the Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Pearce, one of the best of the author's performances, and one that could least be spared in the whole collection, while such sedulous care was taken to extract every scrap that could be found in some of the magazines.—There is likewise an excellent Association Letter on Religious Declension, that should have appeared amongst the author's works.—To these omissions may be added, the History of William Wright, a small but interesting tract—the Statement of facts relative to Soham case—the Admission of Unbaptised persons to the Lord's supper, inconsistent with the New Testament—the life of Joseph Fuller, inserted in a monthly journal—and some unpublished letters, addressed to the Rev. Thomas Scott, on the nature of Substitution and the extent of the Atonement.—There were also some short Sketches of Sermons, published in one of the Newspapers, during the author's lifetime, which have not been noticed.

If another edition of Mr. Fuller's works should be called for, it is hoped that these hints may be useful to the compiler, and that care will be taken to render it more deserving of public patronage. In that case, if my services be not again declined, I should very willingly admit of the present volume being added to the number, in order to complete the series of Mr. Fuller's writings, on proper application being made to me or to my representative for that purpose.

Having now performed my last duty to the public, in reference to the Life and Labours of Mr. Fuller, I anticipate with some confidence the approbation of posterity, for attempting to rescue from oblivion the remains of this eminent man, which must otherwise have perished inevitably from the page of history.

October 23. 1826. J. W. MORRIS.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IMPROPRIETY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

In Reply to a Correspondent.

LETTER I.

THAT there are circumstances attending the worship of God, whether it be moral or positive, which are not the objects of divine appointment, I allow; such as the tunes in singing, and whether we baptise in a pool or in a river, or drink the wine at the Lord's supper out of a silver or pewter or wooden cup. Each of these are alike indifferent. I do not admit however, that we have no example for uninspired preaching. On the contrary we have no proof, that I remember, that even the apostles themselves were under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit in their sermons, nor in all their writings; though they were in those which have place in the holy scriptures. Be that as it may: If what every preacher advanced had been inspired, it would itself have contained the oracles of God; but in that case there would have been no propriety in that direction—'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.' 1 Pet. iv. 11.

As to our using human compositions in singing, I have sometimes had my doubts, whether we ought not to sing the poetical parts of scripture set to sacred music. I should rejoice to see a book of such divine hymns introduced into all our churches, taking place of a vast load of trash and insipidity. If we had not hymns inspired, ready to our hands, any more than tunes, I should then think that the composing of the one as well as of the other, was a circumstance of worship left to human powers. But be this as it may, whether the hymns we sing be a discretional concomitant of worship or not, this cannot be said of instrumental music. It was from the first a subject of *divine injunction*. The very passage which you have quoted proves this. 2 Chron. xxix. 25—28. You must have seen with what tender regard to divine authority it was introduced. It was 'according to the command of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of Jehovah by his prophets.' If the writer had designed merely to guard against the idea of David's having done it of his own discretion, he could not have chosen words better adapted to his purpose: and indeed it manifestly appears that this was his design.

But you say, Instrumental music "was not instituted by any express command of the ceremonial law; that it has nothing in it of the nature of a positive institute, and cannot therefore be considered as abolished by the introduction of the gospel." To this I reply—

1. Its not being required by the law of Moses does not prove, that it "was not instituted by any express command." You seem to be aware of this, and therefore have softened your position by adding the words, "the law of Moses."

2. Its not being required by the law of Moses does not prove, that it was "not a part of the ceremonial law which is abolished by the gospel." A great number of the directions relating to the building of the temple, and the regulation of its worship, were ceremonial, though

not commanded "by the law of Moses;" and were all abolished when that temple ceased to exist. See 1 Chron. xxviii. 11—19. These appendages to the temple could not survive the temple, and it appears that instrumental music was a kind of appendage to the sacrifices of those times. So it seems to be represented in 2 Chron. xxix. 25—28. And it was as much abolished when sacrifices ceased, as the others were when the temple was no more.

3. If instrumental music was no part of ceremonial worship, it must have been *moral;* for what has already been advanced proves that it was not a mere discretional circumstance of worship, concerning which no commandment was given. That the vocal praising of God is a moral duty, I allow; but the use of instruments is not so. It is a practice which has every property of a positive institute, and not one, that I recollect, of moral obligation. That all duties, both moral and positive, are *commanded* of God, is true; but what is moral is commanded because it is right; and the motive by which it is enforced is not the mere will of the legislator; whereas that which is positive is right because it is commanded. The whole authority in the latter case rests upon the divine command, and this is the ground on which the practice of instrumental music is rested in the scriptures. It was 'according to the commandment of David, and of Gad, and Nathan—For so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.' 2 Chron. xxix. 25. This is a kind of language which is never used of *vocal* music, or of any other moral duty, but which exactly accords with what is said of other positive institutions; particularly those which respected the appendages of temple worship. 2 Chron. viii. 14.—Another thing by which moral and positive duties are distinguished is, that the former are binding alike in all ages and nations; but the latter, originating in divine appointment, are binding only at those places to which the appointment extends. Now you yourself say, that instrumental music "was not in general use till Da-

vid's time, which was five hundred years after the law." If it had been a moral duty, it would have been obligatory at all times, before David's time as well as in it; and we should have read of it, as I think we do of every moral duty, in the new testament.

4. Your argument from *the worship of heaven* reminds me of the argument in favour of the surplice, from the heavenly inhabitants being clothed 'in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints;' to which Robinson replies, We are sorry to say, it is all the righteousness that some saints have! But seriously, the heavenly employments and enjoyments are frequently illustrated by things borrowed from the jewish ceremonial, which things were once right, but in our day would be 'will-worship.' Col. ii. 23. The blessed above are said to be made kings and 'priests' unto God. The same chapter in which we read of 'harps,' we also read of a 'temple,' and an 'altar' in heaven. Rev. xiv. 17, 18. But what would you think of an argument derived from hence, in favour of modern priests, temples, and altars?

In short, instrumental music, the more I think of it, appears with encreasing evidence to be utterly unsuited to the genius of the gospel dispensation. There was a glare, if I may so express it, which characterised even the divine appointments of judaism. An august temple, ornamented with gold and silver, and precious stones, golden candlesticks, golden altars, priests in rich attire, trumpets, cymbals and harps; all of which were adapted to an age and dispensation, when the church was in a state of infancy. But when the substance is come, it is time that the shadows flee away. The best exposition of harps in singing, is given by Dr. Watts—

> "Oh may my heart in tune be found
> Like David's harp of solemn sound."

LETTER II.

I CANNOT forbear remarking the great similarity between your reasoning, and that of Episcopalians in favour of certain ceremonies to which the Puritans objected. They did not pretend that they were *obligatory*, but merely *lawful*; that they had been of divine authority under the former dispensation, and were now matters of discretion. If this were indeed the case, and they had followed the example of an apostle, they would have relinquished them when they proved an occasion of offence. When some of the Corinthians pleaded for the lawfulness of eating the good creatures of God, though they had been offered in sacrifice to idols, Paul replies, granting them their principle, 'Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse.' In a similar manner the Puritans answered the Episcopalians. Uncommanded ceremonies, granting them to be lawful, commend us not to God: for neither if we use them are we the better, neither if we disuse them are we the worse: and seeing they create much offence, they ought to be relinquished. And thus, though your principles should be true, your practice may be condemned. That for which you plead is confessedly not a duty. It commendeth you not to God: for neither if you make use of instruments are you the better, neither if you disuse them are you the worse: and seeing the use of them occasions offence to many serious minds, it ought to be relinquished.

But as Paul, after granting the Corinthians their argument, and condemning their conduct even on that ground, proceeded to prove that *the thing itself was unlawful;* so I hope to prove the unlawfulness of Instrumental Music in Christian Worship.

Instrumental music, I grant, was before the times of David; but if it were for the purpose of promoting civil joy, or when employed in divine worship, authorised by divine appointment, nothing favourable to your argument can be thence inferred.

Musical instruments were first invented by Jubal, a descendant of Cain, for the promoting of civil mirth; and to this purpose they have been employed in all ages and nations to this day. That they were used in the worship of God before the times of David, is true; but it is also true, that there was divine authority for it. Trumpets were appointed to be used on various occasions, by the law of Moses;* also the psaltry, the harp, and the cymbal. You suppose it was not their *use* in religious worship, but the *manner* of it, that was the object of divine appointment. The use of them, you suppose, was discretionary, and not appointed; seeing mention is made of them previous to their being employed in the temple service. But the phraseology of the passage in 2 Chron. xxix. 25, does not favour such an idea. Matthew Henry thus expounds it; "While the offerings were burning upon the altar, the levites sang the song of the Lord, ver. 27; the psalms composed by David and Asaph, ver. 30, with the musical instruments, which God by his prophets had commanded the use of, ver. 25." It is allowed however, that the appointment of instrumental music in the times of David, respected "the special purposes to which it should be applied:" but this does not prove, that it was not previously appointed for other sacred purposes.

You seem to take it for granted, that nothing was appointed of God, unless that appointment was *express:*

* Lev. xxiii. 24. xxv. 9. Num. x. 1—10.

but God has not always conveyed truth in this manner. Though we read of no express appointment, but merely of things being ordered, or done, by *men who were divinely inspired*, yet the same thing is in many cases clearly to be understood. We are not expressly told that God appointed the means of Naaman's cure, namely, his bathing seven times in Jordan; but as a prophet of God directed him to it, we certainly conclude that he did so. The Spirit of God that was in the prophet directed it. Thus, though the use of the psaltry, tabret, pipe and harp, in sacred things, be not expressly commanded till the times of David; yet being used before his time as the means of prophetic inspiration, their being divinely appointed for the purpose, cannot be denied. 1 Sam. x. 5. 2 Kings iii. 15.

I incline to think that the use of the *timbrel* by Miriam and the women of Israel, was merely *civil*.* It was an instrument necessary to the *dance*, and mostly, if not invariably, connected with it. It does not appear to have been used in singing the song of Moses, but at certain intervals. On account of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, one while they sang praises, and another while Miriam and the women went forth with the timbrel and the dance. It was a great national deliverance; and civil joy, with the common expressions of it, were mingled with their praises of Jehovah. But granting it was a part of *religious* exercise, it was introduced by one who in the very act is called 'a prophetess;' a name which is no where else ascribed to her; and no reason that I know of can be given for its being ascribed to her here, but that of intimating that she acted under divine authority. If, as you contend, it was a part of "discretionary" worship, the same must be said of *dancing*, which accompanied it; and then it would be lawful in our worshipping assemblies to introduce not only the pipe, but the dance.

* Exod. xv. 20.

"Positive institutions, you say, were confined to time, place, manner, and other circumstances; but instrumental music was governed by such a variety of discretionary considerations as find no room in the institutes of judaism. It might be performed at any other time, as well as at the stated periods of public worship; in any place, and on various public occasions, which are not specified by any law." You will allow the offering of sacrifices to have been a part of instituted worship; yet there are almost all the varieties attending it, as those which you have mentioned. Those of Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, were not "specified by the letter of any law;" but were offered on a great variety of occasions, and prior to the time that the ark had rest, at as great a variety of places. Instead therefore, you might say, of the offering of sacrifice to God, possessing every property of a positive institute, it does not appear to possess any of its essentials. The truth is, not one of the things you mention afford any proof for or against instituted worship; each is equally applicable to *sacrifice* and *praise*, though the one is a positive and the other a moral duty.

Some of the *occasions* you refer to, in which instrumental music is used, might be merely *civil*. Such appears to be the going forth of Jephtha's daughter, with 'timbrels and dances,' on occasion of his victory over the Ammonites; and the female processions on occasion of David's having slain Goliah, and the Philistines being defeated. A band of Bengal music was sent before Messrs. Thomas and Carey, in their curious procession to Bote Haut;* to which, if I had been in their place, I should have had no objection, but rather have enjoyed it, as it was an expression of the civility and friendship of the Booteas. Others I allow were *religious;* as, the bringing up of the ark, the building of the city wall, &c. But in these instances there are plain traces of divine authority, and such as indicate that instrumental music was approved

* Period. Accounts of the Baptist Mission, vol. i. pp. 363, 364.

of God, before the arrangement of the temple service. The music used on the former of these occasions must have been previous to this, as it was before the ark had rest. Yet the whole of that solemn procession was 'before the Lord,' even the exercise of dancing and playing, which exposed David to the revilings of Michal. This was his own defence against her. 2 Sam. vi. 21—23. God accepted the worship too, and punished the reviler. But as Paul inferred from the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, that it was offered 'in faith;' so may we infer from the acceptance of the worship of David, that it was performed in obedience to the divine will. The conduct of David in praising the Lord with instruments of music, is more than once mentioned as a model *of divine authority*, for after times. Not only did they follow his example in the times of Hezekiah, as being according to the commandment of God and his prophets, 2 Chron. xxix. 25; but when the foundation of the second temple was laid, the levites are said to have 'praised the Lord with cymbals, according to the *ordinance* of David, king of Israel.' Ezra iii. 10. And afterwards when the wall of the city was built, the singers are described as having 'the musical instruments of David, the man of God,' Neh. xii. 36; which is a mode of speaking paramount to their being ascribed to divine authority. The example of David need not have been alleged, if it had been a mere discretionary matter, and not the performance of a sacred duty.

But admitting my position, you dispute the *application* of it to the case in hand; arguing, that we are allowed to retain some things which are ceremonial, though not obliged to use them as formerly; and instance in prostration, in certain times of worship, and certain garments. I do not know that prostration is ever made a part of instituted worship; it was a posture dictated by a humble spirit in all ages, and is still the same on various occasions. As to garments, we are allowed to use them in a

mere civil way, as they were always used, but not as making any part of religious worship. We may wear a linen coat for coolness in summer, and a woollen one for warmth in winter; but if we make them any part of religion, we sin. Such reasoning would justify all the fripperies of modern superstition; most of which may be traced to jewish origin. The jews were obliged to worship at certain times, and we may worship at those times. We must worship at some time, and that time may happen to be the same as theirs; but we are not at liberty to choose those times which were then of divine appointment. If we do, an apostle will be 'afraid of us.' Gal. iv. 10, 11. Had you only affirmed, that what was obligatory on the jews is with us discretionary in *civil* concerns, I should have had no objection, no, not to instrumental music; but if you make them a part of *worship*, you throw open a door to a flood of corruption.

Of the tribe of Judah, Moses 'saith nothing' concerning priesthood. From hence Paul inferred there *was* nothing. Of priests, altars, sacred garments, and instrumental music in christian worship, the new testament 'saith nothing.' Is it improper then to infer, *that no such things were known in the times of the first christians?*

You perceive nothing in instrumental music contrary to the genius of the gospel. Another might say the same of *dancing*. But suppose you were to read in some ancient writer, that it was the custom of the primitive churches, when assembled together for worship, to sing with psalteries and harps, and cymbals and organs, and to dance like David before the ark. Would you not suspect the veracity of the writer, or conclude that he had been misinformed? Yet why should you, if there be nothing in these things contrary to the genius of the gospel?

The new testament speaks of praising God by *singing*, but farther it says not. 'After supper they sang a hymn.'

—'I will sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also'—'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.'

Paul speaks more than once, in his epistle to the Corinthians, of instruments of music, but not as being used in religion. He describes them as necessary to war, but not to worship; and speaks of them in language of degradation, as 'things without life, giving sound.' If I have not charity, says he, I am as 'sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.'

The history of the church during the three first centuries, affords many instances of the primitive christians engaging in singing; but no mention, that I recollect, is made of instruments. Even in the times of Constantine, when every thing grand and magnificent was introduced into christian worship, I find no mention made of instrumental music. If my memory does not deceive me, it originated in the dark ages of popery, when almost every other superstition was introduced under the plea of its according with the worship of the old testament. At present it is most in use where these kinds of superstitions are most prevalent, and where the least regard is paid to primitive simplicity. I remember lately to have noticed a description of modern Paris, by one of their own writers. "If, says he, you are attached to religious solemnities, you will find some of all sorts. Catholics, who offer up their prayers to the deity, with the sound of musical instruments. Lutherans, who calmly listen to the lectures from the bible and the gospel. Theo-Philanthropists, worshipping deists, who flourish in language, and sing as if they were at the opera."

I conclude with reminding you, that on the principle of *discretionary* worship, you may introduce the dance, and commence Welsh jumpers; the surplice, and become episcopalians; and even the mitre, and shake hands with his Holiness. I doubt not but *your* discretion will keep

you from these things; but if there be no bar but discretion, I do not see what right you have to censure them in others.

The Editor cannot forbear adding a note, expressive of the sentiments entertained by Mr. HALL on this subject, communicated in a letter dated April 2. 1800, soon after reading the above correspondence.

"In my apprehension," says this elegant writer, "there is not room for a moment's hesitation, on the *lawfulness* of instrumental music in christian worship, whatever may be thought of its *expedience*, a point on which no general determination can be passed, but must entirely be left to circumstances. Viewing the subject merely in the light of reason, the propriety of both kinds of music results from the fitness of certain sounds to excite and express devout emotion. This property they both have in a great if not an equal degree, and therefore to each attaches a natural suitability.

Considering them in the light of ordinances, the introduction of musical instruments in jewish worship by divine authority, will surely not prove that it is in itself wrong. Practices which have an inherent property are not rendered sinful, by their having been matter of positive institution, even when that appointment ceases; unless it be imagined that God exercises his sovereignty, by always selecting as the object of positive institutes, things in themselves *ineligible*, which seems to me a very harsh doctrine.—It is better in such points to avoid all eager altercation, and to practise the most perfect toleration. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that useth an instrument, to the Lord he useth it, and giveth God thanks: he that useth not an instrument, to the Lord he useth it not, and giveth God thanks."

Reflections on Mr. Belsham's Review

OF

MR. WILBERFORCE'S TREATISE.

Written in 1798.

SOON after Mr. Belsham had removed to Hackney, he printed his sermon on The Importance of Truth, in which he strongly maintained the superior moral efficacy of his principles. Amongst other things he affirmed, that "those who were singularly pious with [Calvinistic] principles, could not have failed to have been much better, if they had imbibed a different creed."

Several things of the same kind were thrown out by other writers of the party. These pretensions were soon after examined by the author of The Calvinistic and Socinian systems compared. On the appearance of that publication, though Dr. Priestley could not be persuaded to read it, yet as Mr. Belsham, it is said, assured him "it was well worthy of his perusal," it may be presumed that he himself has perused it. And as he is equally concerned to defend his assertion, and has been called upon to do so, it might have been expected that he would have come forward and answered that publication. But whatever be the reason, he has always shown himself averse to such an undertaking.

Two of his brethren however have stood forward, namely, Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Kentish: but neither of them has ventured to vindicate him, or Dr. Priestley. A Reply also to these publications has appeared, by the author of The Systems Compared; and lately Mr. Kentish has published Strictures upon that Reply. There is a

certain point in controversy, at which it is proper to discontinue it. "When," as Dr. Watts observes, "little words and occasional expressions are dwelt upon, which have no necessary connection with the grand point in view,"* and when a serious investigation becomes likely to degenerate into vain wrangling, it is best to cease. When it comes to this, the public mind says Desist; and with this decision it becomes a writer, instead of tenaciously contending for the last word, respectfully to acquiesce.

To this may be added, when the misstatements of an opponent are numerous, his sentiments sufficiently explicit, and his expositions of scripture, with all his critical accoutrements, too absurd to be regarded by serious and thinking minds, the continuation of a controversy is not more tedious to a reader, than it must be irksome to a writer. The subject is before the public: let them decide.

A few remarks however may be offered on a passage or two in Mr. Belsham's Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise.

Having given a brief account of his own opinions, he adds, "This short abstract of Unitarian principles will enable us to judge of the value of an argument proposed in a work entitled, Calvinism and Socinianism Compared, upon which Mr. Wilberforce passes a very high encomium; the amount of which is, 'We Calvinists being much better christians than you Socinians, our doctrines must of course be true.' To this masterly defence of the doctrines of christianity, and acute refutation of the opposite errors, Mr. Wilberforce and his friends are welcome. The Unitarians will not trespass upon the holy ground. We have learned, that 'not he who commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth;' and satisfied with this, we wait with cheerful confidence the decision of that day which shall try every man's work. In the

* Improvement, part ii. chap. 8.

mean time we rest our cause upon the scriptures critically examined, and judiciously explained. This way of reasoning is branded in the same masterly performance as 'mangling and altering the translation to our own minds,' which brings to my recollection the quaker's exclamation, Oh argument, oh argument, the Lord rebuke thee." p. 274.

Mr. Wilberforce having observed it 'as an unquestionable fact, a fact which Unitarians almost admit, that they are not distinguished by superior purity of life, and still less by that frame of mind, which by the injunction to be spiritually, not carnally minded, the word of God prescribes to us as one of the surest tests of our experiencing the vital power of christianity.'—"Such," Mr. Belsham replies, "is the candid judgment which Mr. Wilberforce forms of the moral and religious character of the Unitarians. How nearly resembling the character of the pharisee in the parable: 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, nor even as this publican.' How closely bordering upon that supercilious spirit which our Lord reproves in the jews, who concluded because the Son of man came eating and drinking, and affecting no habits of austerity, or unnecessary singularity, that he must therefore be the friend and associate of publicans and sinners. But be it known to Mr. Wilberforce, and to all who like him are disposed to condemn their brethren unheard, that if the Unitarians were inclined to boast in the characters of those who have professed their principles, they have whereof to glory; and if they took pleasure in exposing the faults of their more orthodox brethren, they likewise have tales to unfold, which would reflect little credit, either on the parties or on their principles. But of such reproaches there would be no end." pp. 267, 268.

On these passages I take the liberty of offering a few remarks—

1. The *amount* of the work to which Mr. Belsham alludes, is not what he makes it to be: that 'we Calvinists being much better christians than you Socinians, our

doctrines must of course be true.' A large proportion of that work is designed to point out the native tendency of principles, or what, other things being equal, they may be expected to produce in those who imbibe them.

2. If that part of the work which relates to facts, fall under a censure of self commendation, the same may be said of the writings of some of the best of men who have ever written. Mr. Neale, in his History of the Puritans, thought it no breach of modesty to prove, that they were far better men than their persecutors.* The reformers, in establishing their cause, availed themselves of the immoralities of the papists, and the superior moral efficacy of the doctrine of the reformed churches upon the hearts and lives of men. The ancient fathers, in their apologies for christianity, constantly appealed to the holy lives of christians as a proof of the purity of their doctrine. And the apostles, though they praised not themselves, yet made no scruple of affirming, that those who believed their doctrines were 'purified in obeying them;' that they 'were of God,' and that 'the whole world was then lying in wickedness.' These things were truths, and they had a right to insist upon them; not for the purpose of commending themselves, but for the sake of doing justice to the gospel.

3. In reflecting upon the ground of argument used by the author of The Systems Compared, contemptuously calling it 'holy ground,' does not Mr. Belsham cast a reflection upon the great Founder of the christian religion, who taught his disciples to judge of the tree by its fruits?†

* Vol. i. chap. 8.

† If Mr. Belsham should distinguish, as Mr. Kentish does, between the *truth* of doctrines and their *value*, and maintain that the effects which they produce are a proper criterion of the latter, but not of the former; it might be asked, whether the value of a doctrine does not imply its truth? Surely, falsehood will not be reckoned valuable; and if so, whatever proves the value of a doctrine, proves it at the same time to be true.

4. By rejecting this ground of argument, and professing to rest his cause upon another, Mr. Belsham, after the example of Dr. Toulmin, has given up the controversy, as it respects the moral efficacy of principles.

5. If reasoning from the moral efficacy of doctrines be improper, and imply the pharisaical spirit of self commendation, Mr. Belsham must have acted improperly and pharisaically in commencing an attack on the Calvinists upon this principle. Did the author of The Systems Compared begin this war? No: it was Mr. Belsham himself that began it. This 'holy ground,' from which he now pretends to retire in disgust, was of his own marking out. It was Mr. Belsham, who, in the plenitude of his confidence, that his cause was the cause of *truth*, first pleaded for its comparative importance, by affirming, that those who were pious and benevolent characters with our principles, would have been much more so with his. And yet this same Mr. Belsham, after thus throwing down the gauntlet, can decline the contest; after two of his brethren have tried all their strength, and summoned all their resources in defence of Socinian piety, he can talk of Unitarians 'not trespassing upon this holy ground,' and of the characters which they *could* produce, were they inclined to boast. Yes: this is the writer, who, after acknowledging that 'Unitarians had often been represented as indifferent to practical religion;' allowing too, 'that there had been some plausible ground for the accusation;' and not justifying such things, but merely expressing a *hope* that they would continue 'but for a time.' This I say is the writer who can now accuse Mr. Wilberforce of pharisaism, for repeating his own concessions; and what is worse, can justify that life of dissipation which he had before condemned, by comparing it

Should he farther allege with the above writer, that "this celebrated saying is proposed as a test of character, and not as a criterion of opinion;" it might be answered, it is proposed as a test of *false* prophets or teachers; a character never ascribed to those whose doctrines accord with *truth*. See Matt. vii. 15.

with the conduct of him, who 'came eating and drinking, and affecting no habits of austerity or unnecessary singularity.'

6. It is not true, that the author of The Systems Compared has objected, either to the 'critical examination or judicious explanation of the scriptures.' It is true, he has not adopted this as his ground of argument; yet instead of denying it in others, as Mr. Belsham would have it thought, he has expressed his approbation of it. It is not of criticising, and much less of judiciously explaining the scriptures, that he complains, but of perverting them. In the same page in which he complained of the Socinians 'mangling and altering the translation to their own minds,' he also said, 'Though it be admitted that every translation must needs have its imperfections, and that those imperfections ought to be corrected by fair and impartial criticism; yet where alterations are made by those who have an end to answer by them, they ought always to be suspected, and will be so by thinking and impartial people.' If Mr. Belsham had quoted this part of the passage, as well as the other, it might have prevented the pleasure which he doubtless felt, in repeating the quaker's exclamation. To say nothing of his pedantic supposition, that all argument is confined to criticising texts of scripture; let others judge who it is that is under the necessity of exclaiming, 'Oh argument, oh argument, the Lord rebuke thee!' After all, the *stress* which our opponents lay upon criticism, affords a strong presumption against them. It was a shrewd saying of Robinson's, 'Sober criticism is a good thing: but wo be to the system that hangs upon it!'

7. The threat which Mr. Belsham holds out of 'the tales which they could tell of their orthodox brethren,' contains an unfounded implication. Any reader would suppose from this passage, that Mr. Belsham's opponents had dealt largely in such tales: but this is not true. If the author on whom he reflects had been disposed to deal in articles of this kind, he might possibly have swelled

his publication beyond its present size. But contrary to this, he professedly disclaimed introducing individual characters, or private tales, on either sides, as being equally invidious, and unnecessary to the argument. The truth is, he rested his cause upon the concessions of his adversaries; and this is the galling circumstance to Mr. Belsham and his party. What tales have been told are of their telling. They may now insinuate what great things they *could* bring forward in their own favour, and to our disadvantage, were they not restrained by considerations of modesty and generosity. But they can do nothing, and this they well know, without first retracting what they have conceded; nor even then, forasmuch as all such retractions would manifestly appear to the world to be only to answer an end.

In fine, I appeal not merely to Mr. Belsham's special jury, of 'men of enlightened minds, and sound learning,' but to every man of common understanding, whether his apology for declining a defence of his own assertion be either ingenuous or just; whether a larger portion of misrepresentation and self-contradiction could well have been crowded into so small a compass; and whether what he has advanced can be considered in any other light, than as the miserable groan of a dying cause.

EZEKIEL'S VISIONS.

Chap. i. and x.

THESE visions seem very obscure. Most expositors consider the 'living creatures' to be angels: but they appear to be the same as the 'four beasts,' or living creatures, in Rev. v. 8, 9. And these are redeemed men; for they sung, 'thou hast redeemed us.' Others interpret them by the four beasts in the Revelation, understanding both of gospel ministers. But what relation had gospel ministers with the visions of Ezekiel, or the prophecies that follow? Probably the following observations may cast some light upon the subject.

1. It was not unusual for the prophets, when they first received their commission, to be favoured with some extraordinary vision. Isai. vi. Rev. i.

2. These visions had something in them suited to the occasion. The year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah had a vision of Jehovah 'sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.' The great high priest of the church, 'walking among the seven golden candlesticks,' denoted the interest he took in the affairs of the church, to which the prophecies of the Revelation referred. We may therefore expect to find something in Ezekiel's visions suited to the state of things at that time.

3. They may therefore be understood in general, as a representation of the God and King of Israel, with a glorious retinue, in a moveable position, as ready to take leave of Jerusalem. God had been used to 'dwell between the cherubims' in the temple: this was the character under which he was often addressed. Psal.

lxxx. 1. The cherubim formed, as it were, the retinue or attendants of the God and King of Israel. While he *dwelt* in Zion, they were *stationary*; but now he was about to depart from his abode, and therefore his retinue are represented as in a moveable position, connected with a kind of wheel chariot, or moveable vehicle. This accords with the glory of God departing from the temple, and standing upon the threshold. Ezek. x. 4. This also would render the exclamation, 'Oh wheel,' very affecting, as the sight of a chariot ready to take away your dearest friend. Chap. x. 13.

4. With respect to this retinue, perhaps it may be interpreted by a reference to the 'living creatures' in the Revelation, who, as we have noticed, appear to be redeemed men. Who then amongst men were the attendants of God? The priests and prophets under the old testament, and evangelical ministers under the new. By the 'living creatures' therefore in Ezekiel, may be understood those servants of God who attended him in that day, of which the cherubims in the temple were emblematical; and by those of John, the ministers of the gospel who attended him under that dispensation, and took the lead in the worship and progress of the church.

The *stationary* situation of the cherubim in the temple, might afford a constant lesson to the servants of God. Their figure and position would point out to them their duty. And the *appearance* of them to Isaiah and Ezekiel in vision, would impress them with a lively sense of the importance of that office they were going to assume.

Perhaps, after all, the retinue of the God and King of Israel included not only the priests and prophets, but the holy angels. The seraphim in Isaiah's vision seems most easily applied to them; and in allusion to the stooping posture of the cherubim over the ark and mercyseat in the temple, the angels are said to 'look into' the things of the gospel. 1 Pet. i. 12.

Remarks on Public Collections

FOR

BUILDING PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Written in 1795.

It may not be amiss to communicate some thoughts, which, I apprehend, may serve to prevent a too common grievance. I mean, that of [public] collections for repairing and building places of religious worship, among the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters. To me it has been a grievance for some years past, the number of applications has been so great; as I feel a pain in refusing to countenance them, and am hurt at treating any of my brethren with coolness and indifference.

The expenses of some edifices have been surprising, from one to two thousand pounds. The plea has been this: We had a large congregation, but they were all poor, and we were forced to have a spacious building. As to repairs, the reason assigned is, They came to much more than we apprehended, by some scores of pounds; but we judged it best to do the business effectually, and to subscribe what we could; then we concluded, we could easily collect the rest among the churches. Another plea has been, Our salary for the minister was but small, and we resolved on the attempt to build him a parsonage house; and though we could do but little towards it ourselves, we did not doubt but we could raise the sum among other congregations.

Far be it from me to do any thing to injure or obstruct that spirit of liberality which prevails among my brethren: I only wish to prevent the abuse of it. Permit me then to ask the following questions—

1. Ought not congregations to be contented with places of worship suited to their circumstances? I remember in my young time to have worshipped for many years in a barn, that was fitted up for the purpose; and I believe there was as much of truth, fervour and edification, as is to be found now in many pompous temples.

2. Is there not often more zeal exercised about the outward building, to gratify a popular taste, and appear with a sort of secular grandeur to the world, than there is manifested to enlarge, beautify, and build up that truly spiritual edifice, the church of God.

3. If professors have a proper regard for real christianity, personal and social, they will not be at a loss for a place to assemble in, to observe the laws of Christ. When this was the case in the first age, and the greatest part of the second, do we read of any such thing as collections for building houses of public worship? They had no stately temples; their collections were only for their poor brethren, and the expenses of several of their societies.

4. Is there not oftentimes as much money spent by our modern collectors, in travelling from town to town, as would provide a decent place of worship for most of our congregations?

5. Are the monies thus collected, always invested in hands which the majority of the society most approve? I am misinformed, if this be universally the case.

6. Would it not be better to confine these collections to districts, where the state and circumstances of the congregation are known?

7. Should not ministers and respectable persons be very careful in signing recommendations of petitions, when they are not well acquainted with the particulars of the case?

I have known this to be too often done, in order to get rid of the petitioners, and send them off to another congregation.

The subject appears to me in such a point of view, that

I must for the future decline attending to applications of this sort, unless some one should convince me that I have mistaken it. But I must assure you, that I would never wish to discourage, in myself or others, any kind of liberality that might in any way conduce to promote the real cause of Christ; for I think it my greatest honour to endeavour to sustain the character of a disciple of Christ, both in word and deed; and the deed of generous liberality is, I apprehend, its distinguishing property and glory.

DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is the name wherewith She shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. Jer. xxxiii. 16.

It may seem too much for the church of Christ to bear a name which is properly applicable only to Christ himself, and is expressly given to him in chap. xxiii. 6, of the same prophecy. Interpreters have attempted to account for this in different ways. Some have rendered the words, 'And this is the name of Him that shall call her,' as we should say, by his grace, 'The Lord our righteousness.' But the words clearly import an appellation given to the church. Others have supposed the church to be called after the name of Christ, on account of her intimate union with him, as a woman is called after the name of her husband. But this is a modern practice, to which therefore there can be no allusion.

The name in the Hebrew is *Jehovah-tsidkenu*; and if I am not mistaken, the use of several other of these compound terms in the old testament will determine the meaning of the passage in question. When Abraham was about to offer up his son, in the very moment of

extremity his hand was stayed, and a lamb was provided. Abraham, in commemoration of this signal interposition, called the name of the place *Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord will see or provide. When God gave Israel the victory over Amalek, Moses built an altar, and called it *Jehovah-nissi*, the Lord my banner. When Gideon, having seen an angel of God, was apprehensive that he should die, and the Lord comforted him, saying, Peace be unto thee, fear not; he built an altar, and called it *Jehovah-shalom*, the Lord send peace. Finally, when the church in the latter day, under the form of a city, is described in prophecy, it is said that its name shall be called *Jehovah-shammah*, the Lord is there.* Now the *place* where Abraham received the lamb was not *Jehovah*, nor either of the *altars* erected by Moses and Gideon. They were only memorials of what Jehovah had wrought. Neither will the city, described by Ezekiel, be Jehovah; but the presence of Jehovah shall be so sensibly and manifestly with it, that this shall be its *name*, or *distinguishing character*. Thus it is that the church, under the gospel dispensation, shall be called *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness; not because she is Jehovah, but because her justification, by the righteousness of Jehovah, forms a kind of prominent feature in her countenance. This leading truth is inscribed upon her in deep and legible characters, like those upon the altars of Moses and Gideon. She is even a standing memorial of it to all generations.

Such, I take it, is the meaning of this prophecy. Let us next enquire whether it accords with fact. If there be a leading principle which distinguishes the gospel church more than any other, it may be expected to occupy a conspicuous place in the new testament. It is true, the old-testament church was accepted of God through the same medium that we are; but the righteousness of *Jesus* not being actually wrought, it does not form so prominent a feature in that dispensation. As soon as our Lord entered

* Gen. xxii. 14. Exod. xvii. 15. Judg. vi. 24. Ezek. xlviii. 35

on his ministry, he declared his errand to be, 'to seek and save that which was lost.' The self-righteous pharisees, who were whole in their own eyes, were most of them left to perish in their own deceivings, while publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God before them. Every encouragement was given to *faith* in the Redeemer. In answer to this the diseased were cured, and the guilty forgiven, whatever had been their former character. Those who embraced the Saviour from among the sect of the pharisees, and who were righteous in their own eyes, were brought to an open renunciation of every thing of this kind, and to sue for mercy among the chief of sinners. This was particularly the case of Saul of Tarsus, who 'counted all things but loss that he might win Christ, and be found in him; not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'*

When the apostles, commissioned by their Lord, went forth preaching the gospel to every creature, this was their errand. To the Jews they thus addressed themselves: 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.'† As to the gentiles, their address to them was in substance as follows: 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'‡

In almost all the epistles, we find this great truth written in legible characters. It is almost the sole object of that to the Romans. To quote all the evidence from it, were to quote the epistle itself. I shall only observe, that there are some errors noted in that epistle, among

* Phil. iii. 8, 9. † Acts xiii. 38, 39. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

believers, and which were to be objects of forbearance: but justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, to the renouncing of all dependence on the works of the law, is not represented as a question that divided believers, but as a principle of such importance as to distinguish believers from unbelievers. 'The gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith; but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone. Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.'*

The disorders of the Corinthians were greater than those of any other of the primitive churches. This, with some who profess to believe this important truth in the present day, would have been thought a sufficient reason for withholding it in this instance, lest it should be abused: but Paul did not withhold it. 'Of him,' says he, 'are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'† He had found them sunk in vice and profligacy. Speaking of fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners; 'and such,' says he, 'were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'‡

The epistle to the Galatians, like that to the Romans, is principally composed of this doctrine. It is here considered of such importance as that the rejection of it 'perverted the gospel of Christ.' Those teachers who set themselves against it, and thereby troubled the churches, the apostle wished to have them 'cut off' from among

* Rom. ix. 30—32. x. 3. † 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.

them. And those professors of christianity, who gave into another system, he considered as 'fallen from grace,' or as having deserted the truth of the gospel; and told them plainly, that Christ was 'become of no effect to them.'*

The epistle to the Ephesians, the object of which seems to be to endear Christ, and the knowledge of him, enumerates the spiritual blessings with which God hath blessed us in him, and among these is his having made us 'accepted in the Beloved.' And again, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.'

Similar observations might be made on almost all the remaining epistles. I shall content myself with only referring to a few passages in the margin,† and offering a few remarks on the apparent inconsistency of Paul and James on this subject. If the justification on which these sacred writers insist were the same, their doctrine would certainly wear every appearance of contradiction, inasmuch as that the one affirms we are justified 'by faith without the works of the law,' while the other insists that a man is justified 'by works, and not by faith only.' Yea, and what is more, each of them appeals to the case of Abraham, as an example of his doctrine.‡ But if the justification on which they severally insist be different, different things may be affirmed concerning each, without any contradiction. And this is manifestly the case. *Paul* discourses on the justification of the *ungodly*, or of sinners being accepted of God, which is by faith in the righteousness of Christ, without works. *James*, on the justification of the *godly*, or of a saint being approved of God, and which is by works. Abraham is said to have been justified by faith, when he first believed the promise, prior to his circumcision; but by works many years after it,

* Gal. i. 7. v. 4, 12. † Phil. iii. 7—9. 1 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4—7. 2 Pet. i. 1. 1 John ii. 1. Rev. xix. 8.

‡ Rom. iv. 1—6. James ii. 21—26.

his faith was made manifest, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar. The one therefore relates to his acceptance with God as a sinner, the other to his being approved of God as a saint. Both together completed his character. 'He believed, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness:' he obeyed, 'and was called the friend of God.'

Upon the whole, if these observations be just, we are, by this appellation given to the christian church, furnished with a criterion by which to judge of it. It is composed of such characters as, renouncing all dependence upon their own righteousness, rely only upon the righteousness of Christ for acceptance with God; while at the same time their faith is not a dead inoperative opinion, but a vital principle productive of good works.

We also see the justice with which divines have insisted on the importance of this great article of faith. It was with good reason that Luther, in particular, considered it as a kind of corner stone in the Reformation. Those reformed communities, whether national or congregational, which have relinquished this principle in their confessions of faith, or which, retaining it in their confessions, yet renounce or neglect it in their ordinary ministrations, have with it lost the spirit and power of true religion.

DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS DEFENDED,

Against the exceptions of a Correspondent, in 1799.

I AGREE with your correspondent, Christopher, that "a manly and christian avowal of our sentiments tends to the discovery and establishment of truth;" to which also "I devoutly wish that all our differences may verge."

But if I thought that "difference of opinion," or as I should call it, the imbibing of opposite religious principles, was any otherwise "unavoidable in the present state," than as every other species of sinful imperfection is so, I should consider the attainment of truth as an object of no importance; and all our labours to rectify our own and each others' errors, as so many attempts to subvert the order of nature. It were absurd to attempt to reduce to uniformity the natural differences of men's tastes and features: and if differences in religion be of the same kind, as your correspondent seems to think, it were equally absurd to attempt to lessen them, or "devoutly to wish them to verge towards truth."

But really, sir, I feel at a loss how to enter upon a defence: and this because I cannot perceive that any thing I have advanced is the object of your correspondent's attack. It is true, he begins by expressing his disapprobation of Imputed righteousness: but I am not the inventor of that doctrine, or of the terms by which it is expressed. If there be any thing objectionable in either, it is the apostle Paul that must be accountable for it, who in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans has repeatedly used the very language, at which your correspondent has taken offence. If the objection had been made to any explanation of the doctrine which I had given, I should have considered myself as called upon to reply: but as what is alleged is against imputation itself, I have no concern in the business. It is on Paul that Christopher has made his attack, and he and Paul must settle the matter.

It is true, he has explicitly stated the notion of imputation to which he objects, which he says is this—"To ascribe *that* to a man which he has not, whereby he is considered righteous, or a good man." But this is as foreign from any thing I have advanced, as darkness is from light. To have answered *me*, he should have collected *my* ideas of the subject: if there were none to collect, there could be nothing to answer. I have no notion

of "ascribing" the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner personally, any more than he has. I should as soon "ascribe" the unrighteousness of the sinner to Christ, as the righteousness of Christ to the sinner. The *imputation* of sin to Christ, and of righteousness to the sinner, appears to me to consist not in God's thinking or judging of characters differently from what they are, or declaring them to be what they are not; but in his treating or *dealing with them*, not according to their personal merit or demerit, but according to those of another. God neither thought his Son to be wicked, nor declared him to be so; but he treated or dealt with him, *as if he had been so.* God neither thinks the character of the believing sinner such as his righteous law approves, nor declares it to be so: but he treats or deals with him, *as if it were so*, out of respect to the righteousness of him in whom he believeth.

Of course, by the term *righteous*, as it is used with reference to justification, I do not mean the same thing as being "a good man." I should as soon consider Christ's being 'made sin for us' as the same thing with his being made a bad man, as I should our being made 'the righteousness of God in him,' to be the same thing with our being made good men. This is utterly confounding justification with sanctification; which indeed appears to me to be the drift of the whole piece.

The statement which Christopher gives of men's recovery by Jesus Christ, seems to represent sinners not as accepted of God, out of regard to what Christ has done, but on the ground of "the divine life and likeness within us;" and that the righteousness which he disclaims as the ground of his hope, is not what he performs under the character of a christian, but merely what he has performed prior to his sustaining that character, or while he was unrighteous.

The connection in which he has introduced Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' renders it pretty evident that by 'Christ' in this passage, he understands the

image or likeness of Christ in us. But surely this was not Paul's meaning: of Christ, who was in or among the Colossians, he adds, 'whom we preach.' But it was not the image of Christ in our hearts that was the subject of Paul's ministry.

If even our evangelical obedience be the ground of acceptance with God, I should be glad to be informed—(1) How it is that *works* are constantly excluded in the justification of sinners.*—(2) How it is that God is said to *justify the ungodly.*† I do not suppose that when a sinner is justified, he is actually an enemy to God; for in the same passage he is supposed to be a believer, which character is inconsistent with such a state of mind. But as Dr. Owen has observed, "To say that he who worketh not is justified through believing, is to say that his works, whatever they be, have no influence in his justification; nor hath God in justifying him any respect unto them."—(3) How is it that the righteousness by which we are justified is represented as *revealed* to faith, and as being *to* and *upon* all them that believe?‡ Are the dispositions of our own minds 'revealed' to us?—(4) How is it that such *objections* are made to the christian doctrine of justification, if holy dispositions were the ground of it? If Paul had taught justification by evangelical works, and only meant to reject those which were done prior to embracing the gospel; with what plausibility could it have been objected, that his doctrine gave liberty to sin? If the 'righteousness, through which grace reigns to eternal life,'§ meant, as Christopher explains it, "our own righteous dispositions;" with what propriety does the apostle ask, in the following words, 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.'

Your correspondent remarks, that "his friend Gaius seems partial to the phrase, *imputed righteousness.*" Is it unbecoming a christian then, to be partial to the phrase-

* Rom. iii. 24—27. iv. 2—8. † Ch. iv. 5. ‡ Ch. i. 17. iii. 22. § Ch. v. 21.

ology of scripture? What if I should ask friend Christopher, whether he be not prejudiced against this phrase; and not the phrase only, but the doctrine conveyed by it? He might answer, No: I shall allow it in the same sense in which sin is imputed to us, that is, really and truly, by participation of a fallen nature. Then really and truly, friend Christopher, either you or I are entirely out as to the meaning of words. Does the word *impute* really and truly mean to participate? When Ahimelech pleaded before Saul, saying 'Let not the king *impute* any thing unto his servant,' * did he mean, Do not cause me to participate in a conspiracy? When Shimei entreated David, saying 'Let not my lord *impute* iniquity unto me,'† did he mean, Do not make me wicked? Does he not rather mean, do not deal with me according to my desert?

And does the imputation of the sin of our first parent to his posterity, consist in participation? That it is connected with it, I allow. Could an individual be found, who had never made the sin of his first father his own by participating in it, he would, I suppose, have nothing to fear from its being imputed to him. And much the same may be said concerning righteousness; for until a sinner believes in Christ, which includes an acquiescence in the gospel way of salvation, he has nothing to hope from imputation. These things have an inseparable connection; but the plain meaning of words must be altered before we can consider them as the same.

We have the same authority for believing that our sins were imputed to Christ, as that Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity. The word 'impute' is used in neither case, but both are compared to the imputation of righteousness. 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous—He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of

* 1 Sam. xxii. 15. † 2 Sam. xix. 19.

God in him.'* Now will Christopher affirm, that Christ was really and truly made sin by participation?

It does not follow from hence that "the old man, any more than the new man, is a mere creature of imputation," or that the necessity of "repentance and the love of God" are superseded. It is strange that Christopher should have so little regard for the credit of his own understanding, as to insinuate the contrary. He who cannot distinguish between the blessings of justification and sanctification, without setting aside the importance of either, has in my opinion yet to learn one of the first principles of the oracles of God.

REMARKS ON GOD'S JUSTIFYING THE UNGODLY,

In Reply to Dr. Joseph Jenkins of Walworth.

THE passage in my last paper, on which J. J. has animadverted, is as follows—'God is said to *justify the ungodly.*† I do not suppose that when a sinner is justified, he is actually an enemy to God; for in the same text he is supposed to be a *believer,* which character is inconsistent with such a state of mind.'

Now he who controverts these principles, may be supposed to maintain the contrary; namely, that when a sinner is justified, he is actually at enmity with God; and that though he is a believer, as the text intimates, yet his being so includes nothing inconsistent with such a state of mind. And such in fact is the statement of this correspondent.—(1) He endeavours to maintain that when a sinner is justified, he is God's enemy. It is true, he

* Rom. v. 19. 2 Cor. v. 21. † Rom. iv. 5.

says, "I do not suppose, any more than Gaius, that a man can be justified, and at the same time be an enemy to God:" but he means only to allow, that he does not continue an enemy of God *after* he is justified, concerning which there is no dispute. The question is,—In what state of mind is the sinner, with regard to enmity and friendship, *antecedent* to his justification? And by all that J. J. has written, it appears that he considers him as God's enemy "until" he is justified.—(2) He labours to prove, that his being a *believer* includes in it nothing inconsistent with such a state of mind. The faith which is 'counted for righteousness,' he supposes, must either mean Christ, the object of faith, or a spiritual illumination of the understanding, in which the mind is passive: at all events it must include no holy disposition of heart, that is, nothing inconsistent with enmity to God.

Before we examine these positions, it seems necessary to have a clear understanding of what is meant by justification. J. J. distinguishes between justification in the eye of justice, or a sinner's being accepted in the Beloved; and justification as it respects the sensation or perception of the blessing in a person's own mind; adding, that "his more immediate business is with the latter." I am certainly obliged to him for this explanation, for without it I should have supposed the question to relate wholly to acceptance with God itself, and not to the sensation or perception of this blessing in the mind; and still less to the pleas which the sinner is to "bring forward" in his application for mercy. I must say however, if J. J.'s "business" lies here, assuredly mine does not; having never, that I recollect, advanced a single idea on the subject. But if it did, it would not affect the argument; for if we be not in a justified state till we cease to be the enemies of God, it is impossible we should enjoy any previous sensation or perception of it, as no one can truly perceive that which does not exist.

To me it appears that the distinguishing of justification into acceptance with God, and the sensation or percep-

tion of this blessing which a sinner enjoys, has nothing in the scriptures to support it. I think it will not be found on enquiry, that the *former* is that which the sacred writings term justification, and that the *latter* is denominated 'peace with God,' which follows on it as a consequence.* A sensation of peace is as distinct from justification, as a sensation of wrath is distinct from condemnation. As some are justified, that is, exempt from the curse of the law, and entitled to everlasting life, according to the uniform declarations of the statute-book of heaven, while, owing to a cloud upon their minds, they are far from clearly perceiving it; so others stand condemned, that is, exposed to the curse of the law, according to the uniform declarations of the same statute-book of heaven, while, through ignorance and unbelief, they have no proper sense of it.

The question is not concerning any secret persuasion in the mind of man, or any secret purpose in the mind of God: but simply this,—Do the holy scriptures, which form the statute-book of heaven, and fully express the mind of God, pronounce any man pardoned or justified in his sight, while his heart is in a state of enmity against him.

"It is plainly implied," says J. J., "in the Lord's justifying the *ungodly*, that they are ungodly *until* justified." But before any conclusion can be drawn from these words, it is necessary to ascertain the meaning of them, particularly of the term 'ungodly.' This term I apprehend is not designed, in the passage under consideration, to express the actual *state of mind* which the party at the time possesses, but *the character* under which God considers him, in bestowing the blessing of justification upon him. Whatever be the present state of a sinner's mind; whether he be a haughty pharisee, or a humble publican; if he possess nothing which can in any degree balance the curse which stands against him, or at all operate as a

* Rom. v. 1.

ground of acceptance with God, he must be justified, if at all, as unworthy, ungodly, and wholly out of regard to the righteousness of the Mediator. He that is justified must be justified as 'ungodly,' in like manner as he that is saved must be saved among 'the chief of sinners.'* But as Paul's using the latter expression of himself does not prove, that at the time he uttered it he was one of the worst of characters; so neither does his using the former concerning others, prove that they are, at the time of their justification, the enemies of God. If it be objected, that the term 'ungodly' is nowhere else used but to express a state of enmity to God; it may be answered, that God is nowhere else said to 'justify the ungodly.' The interpretation put upon this term therefore is no more singular, than the phraseology of the text itself. Both the one and the other ought no doubt to be interpreted by the general tenour of scripture, and the particular scope of the writer. If the sense here given clash with either of them, let it be rejected. To me it appears in harmony with both. When the reader has considered the following observations, let him judge whether it be so or not.

1. It is the uniform language of the scriptures, that *without repentance there is no forgiveness.*† The very passage to which the apostle in the context refers, (Psal. xxxii.) as affording an example of the imputation on which he was treating, clearly holds up the idea of forgiveness as preseded by repentance. It is of no account to allege the difference between pardon and justification; for whatever difference there is between these blessings, there is none which affects the argument. They are not so distinct as that the one can in any instance exist without the other. He that is justified is pardoned. If therefore repentance presede the one, it must presede the

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

† Psal. xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 13. Mark i. 4. iv. 12. Luke iii. 5. xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 19. v. 31. viii. 22. 1 John i. 9.

other. But if justification be preseded by repentance, it cannot be said that a person is an enemy to God "*until* he is justified," for enmity and repentance are inconsistent.

2. It is the uniform language of the new testament, that *those whom God justifieth are believers.** The very persons referred to in the text under consideration, are supposed to '*believe* in him who justifieth the ungodly.' But faith 'worketh by love,' and is therefore inconsistent with a state of enmity to God. If the uniform language of scripture had been, we believe by, or through being justified; we should certainly have concluded, that justification in the order of things preseded believing, and consequently that those who are justified were at the time enemies to God. And as it is the reverse, or that we are justified by or through believing, why should we not equally conclude, that faith in the order of things presedes justification; and consequently, that they who are justified were at the time, not the enemies but the friends of God.

3. The apostle, in the same epistle as that which contains the passage in question, speaks of justification as *preseded by vocation or calling.* 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate: whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'† It cannot be pleaded, that the order of things is not here preserved. It is allowed on all hands, that predestination is preseded in the order of nature, by foreknowledge, calling by predestination, and glorification by justification. What good reason then can be given, why justification should not from hence be concluded to be preseded by vocation? But the vocation here spoken of is a holy one, the same with that mentioned in 2 Tim. i. 9. 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' which must therefore be inconsistent with enmity to God.

* John iii. 18, 36. v. 24. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. iii. 26. 28. iv. 24. v. 1. x. 4. Gal. ii. 16. iii. 24. Phil. iii. 9. † Rom. viii. 29, 30.

4. The design of the apostle in the context was, to establish the doctrine of *free justification by faith in Jesus Christ*, without the works of the law; a justification that should exclude boasting, or glorying. Now this design is equally accomplished by the interpretation here defended, as by the contrary. I am aware that this ground will be disputed; and let it be disputed. The principle on which I rest my defence, on this part of the subject, is the following:—WHATEVER BE THE STATE OF A PERSON'S MIND AT THE TIME, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE AS TO THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION. J. J. will not deny this: he has acknowledged as much himself. "In this case," he says, "*all works*, good and bad, are out of the question;" and if so, doubtless *all dispositions* are the same. None of them, be they what they may, can avail any thing towards justifying one who has not continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them. But if so, of what account is it to the doctrine of justification by grace, to maintain their nonexistence at the time? The existence or nonexistence of things that are "out of the question," can signify nothing to the argument, and afford no ground of glorying.—Moreover: if the existence of a holy disposition at the time of our being first made partakers of the blessing of justification detract from the grace of it, why should it not operate in the same way afterwards? Justification is not of so transient a nature as to be begun and ended in an instant. Though not progressive, like sanctification, yet it is a permanent privilege, or *state* of blessedness bestowed on believers. As condemnation is a state of exposedness to the curse, under which every unbeliever, remaining such, *continues*; so justification is a state of exemption from it, in which every believer in Jesus *abides*. It is true we are *introduced* to this blessed state at the moment of believing: from that instant we are no more under the law, but under grace: the curses of the former stand no longer against us, and the blessings of the latter become our portion. But though our introduction to the blessing be transient, yet the

blessing itself continues as long as we continue believers in Christ, and united to him, which is to the end. Hence justification and condemnation are each described in language expressive of their continuity. 'It is God that *justifieth*; who is he that *condemneth?* He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life:* and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.' Hence also believers, in every stage of life, deal with Christ for justification, desiring nothing more than that they may be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. And this accounts for Abraham's believing for righteousness, as we shall see presently, not merely when he first believed in God, but after he had loved and served him a number of years; and for David's having righteousness imputed to him without works on his recovery from a state of blacksliding. Now do the holy dispositions of christians detract from the freeness of their continued acceptance with God? If not, why should the existence of any such dispositions detract from the freeness of their first acceptance? If it be necessary that the mind be at enmity with God, "until" we are first introduced to this blessing in order to its being merely of grace; why should it not be equally necessary that it should remain so through life, in order to its continuing to be merely of grace?

5. Neither Abraham nor David, whose cases the apostle selects for the illustration of his argument, were at the time referred to, the enemies of God. 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness;' and it is concerning his justification that the following reflection is made. 'Now to him that worketh is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt.' It is here plainly supposed of Abraham that if he had 'worked,' and so obtained the reward, it had been a matter of debt, and he had had whereof to glory. And did not Abraham work, prior to the period to which this refers? He certainly should not

have performed a single good work, but have been an enemy to God, according to J. J.'s hypothesis. But the truth is, he had been a believer in God, and a true worshipper of him for many years, at the time when he is said to believe in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.* Here then is an account of one who had walked with God for a series of years, 'working not, but believing on him that justifieth the ungodly;' a clear proof that by 'working not,' the apostle did not mean a wicked inaction, but a renunciation of works as the ground of acceptance with God.

'David also,' continues the apostle, 'describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.' Of whom speaketh the psalmist, in this thirty-second psalm; of himself, or of some other man. Of himself as is manifest from the whole psalm. It is one of those penitential songs, which he penned after his fall and recovery. The third and fourth verses describe the state of his mind after he had sinned, and before he had repented. The 'blessedness' of which he speaks is a blessedness arising from *free* forgiveness. Hence the apostle, in the text under consideration, very properly puts this gloss upon his words: 'David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.' David did not say it was 'without works:' he said nothing about works; but he described the blessedness of him who possessed a *free* forgiveness, which was the same thing. Paul supposed that David 'worked not:' but had he never performed a 'good work' at the period referred to? Was he at that time an enemy to God? J. J.'s hypothesis requires that it should have been so: but it was not so. Let the reader judge whether the cases of Abraham and David be not decisive, and whether they ought not to decide the controversy, as to the meaning of the passage in question.

* Gen. xv. 6. xii. 1—3. Heb. xi. 8.

I had supposed that when a sinner is justified, he is not an enemy to God, seeing he is a *believer*. J. J. attempts, it should seem, to invalidate this argument by so explaining faith as that it shall include in it nothing inconsistent with enmity to God. I cannot but remark the unpleasant situation of the writer, in this part of his work. With him it seems a very difficult thing to determine, what the apostle means by that faith which is counted for righteousness. "If it were to be considered as *a work*, he supposes it would overturn the whole reasoning of the verse." If it were considered as a work, performed to furnish a ground of justification, it would; but not else. That faith *is* a work, we are expressly taught by one who perfectly understood its nature.* But that we are justified by it *as* a work, or as a part of moral obedience, J. J. knows I utterly deny. But if it be not counted for righteousness as a work, "it *must* mean either Christ the object of faith, or a spiritual illumination of the understanding, in which the mind is totally passive." That it does not mean the former, one should think is evident, in that it is called believing. 'He that believeth, his faith, or believing, is counted for righteousness.' And if it means the latter, it will go to confound what the scriptures elsewhere distinguish. Spiritual blindness is represented as an obstacle to believing, and spiritual illumination as that which presedes it.† But faith in this passage "must" mean this or that. Perhaps it *must*, in order to comport with J. J.'s hypothesis: and this spiritual light or discernment *must* also be supposed to have nothing spiritual in it, or it will be equally inconsistent with a state of enmity to God as believing. But let him seriously consider, whether that hypothesis which requires such forced and far-fetched interpretations of scripture to support it, can be any part of "evangelical truth."

To me it appears a plain and easy matter to ascertain

* John vi. 28, 29. † 2 Cor. iv. 4. John vi. 40.

the meaning of faith, in the passage referred to. It is believing; and this believing is counted for righteousness; not as a work, but as the prescribed means of interesting us in the righteousness of Christ. Thus it was common for Christ to say to diseased people, whom he had healed, 'thy faith hath saved thee.' Did he mean by this to make a Saviour of faith? No: faith did not cause, nor so much as co-operate in these cures, which were accomplished only by his own power: but it was the prescribed means by which they became interested in the exercise of that power. I use the term interest as I do that of justification, not for what we may have in the secret purpose of God, but for that part or portion which we have in spiritual blessings, according to the revealed will or promise of God in the scriptures. The healing efficacy proceeded from Christ, and not from faith; yet without faith they would not have been healed, and the same may be said of justification.

ON THE NATURE OF IMPUTATION.

In Reply to Ignotus.

I CORDIALLY agree with your correspondent, on the necessary connection between the doctrine of Christ's divinity, and justification by the imputation of his righteousness. But the first of the two grounds on which he rests it, I would seriously entreat him to reconsider. He represents the imputation of righteousness as consisting in a "transfer of surplus virtue;" and as every creature, however exalted, owes its all to God, it can have none to spare for the use of others. But if this be the nature of imputation, how are we to understand it in the case of the *first* Adam? If instead of transgressing the divine

precept, he had faithfully obeyed it, there is every reason to conclude that his posterity, instead of being exposed to sin and death, as they now are, would have been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness; that is, his obedience would have been imputed to them, as is now his disobedience. Yet in this case there would have been no "surplus" of obedience, or any thing done by our first parent beyond what was his duty to do. From hence, I conceive, it is clear that the imputation of righteousness consists not in the transfer of overplus of virtue; and that divinity is not necessarily, and in all cases, connected with it.

I shall not here take upon me to decide, whether Christ's obedience to the Father was necessary on his own account. Whether it was or not, makes nothing as to his being qualified to accomplish our salvation. The imputation of righteousness, as the scriptures represent it, appears to me to be this:—*God for wise and holy ends, blessed one, or many, in reward of the obedience of another, to whom they are related; in a manner as though it were performed by themselves.* Thus, if the first Adam had continued obedient, God would have *expressed his approbation* of his conduct, not only by confirming him, but his posterity after him, in a state of holiness and happiness. And thus *the obedience unto death,* yielded by the second Adam, is represented as that with which God is so well pleased, that *in reward of it,* he not only exalted Him far above all principality and power, but bestowed full, free, and eternal salvation on all those who believe in him, how great soever had been their transgressions.

But it may be said, if this be the idea which the scriptures give us of the imputation of righteousness, and it be applicable to the first as well as the second Adam; whence arises the necessity of the Divinity of Christ, in order that his righteousness should be imputed to us? I do not suppose that it was necessary to imputation itself, but rather to its being *available* to the justification of the ungodly. Imputed righteousness may take place,

whether it be that of a mere man, or of one who is both God and man: but the righteousness of a mere creature would not avail for the pardon and justification of rebellious men.

There is an important difference between the supposed imputation of the righteousness of the first Adam, and that of the second. God's promising to bless the sinless posterity of the former, by confirming them in a state of holiness and happiness, had nothing in it which could clash with any of his perfections. He might thus have blessed them, without any previous obedience being performed on their behalf, as it appears that he actually did the elect angels. His promising to bless the children, in reward of the obedience of the parent, was, that while he expressed his love to both, he might also express his love of righteousness. But in receiving rebellious sinners to favour, there required a proviso for the security of his honour, that he might appear to be what he was—*Just*, as well as *the Justifier*. 'It *became* him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect, through sufferings.' The glory of the divine character must not be tarnished. That for the sake of which we are pardoned and justified therefore, be it what it may, must at least be *equivalent*, as to its influence on moral government, to justice having taken its natural course. Hence arises the necessity of the Deity of Christ, in order to our justification. Though the obedience of a mere creature might be the medium of conveying blessedness to his sinless posterity, yet none but that of a divine person could accomplish the salvation of sinners: because the obedience of a mere creature could not have done such honour to the divine law, as should have been equal to the dishonour which it had received from us: nor could the sufferings of any one that was not God have expressed the divine displeasure against sin in so striking and impressive a manner, as if every transgressor had received his just recompense of reward. But admitting the Redeemer to be divine, all is plain and easy. Hence

that which is peculiarly ascribed to the Deity of Christ in regard of his sufferings is, their *value* or *virtue*. 'By HIMSELF he purged our sins—The blood of Jesus Christ, HIS SON, cleanseth us from all sin.' Heb. i. 3. 1 John i. 7.

DECLINE OF THE DISSENTING INTEREST.

From an original Manuscript, written in 1797,

And afterwards published in the Protestant Dissenter's Magazine.

PART I.

ON looking over some of the late numbers of this periodical work, I observed a complaint of the Dissenting Interest being on the decline. It is true, it was not the first time, nor the only place in which I had met with this complaint: I never before however found my thoughts so much engaged by this subject, or my mind equally inclined to make enquiry into it.

That the dissenting interest has declined in many places, I have no doubt; but whether this be the case with *the general body*, is the question. If it be, it becomes us to make ourselves acquainted with it, and with its causes, that if possible the malady may be lessened, if not entirely healed. Yea, though it should not be the case with the general body, but only with a considerable number of dissenters; yet as 'one member cannot suffer without the whole body suffering with it,' it is an object well worthy of attention.

The present enquiry is naturally divided into two parts; one respects the *fact* itself, and the other the *reasons* of it. The present piece will consist of the first of these enquiries, which will be followed with a second, if it meets with approbation.

Is it then a fact, that the dissenting interest, taken in the whole, has, suppose I say for the last five and twenty years, been upon the decline?

I do not pretend but that the subject has its difficulties, and it is very possible that I may be mistaken. The following observations are however submitted to the consideration of the reader.

1. It cannot be doubted by persons of observation, that the generality of the clergy of this country have of late years lost ground in the estimation of the common people. To say nothing of their ignorance of religion, (the people being equally benighted may prevent their discovering this) the oppressive disposition of great numbers of them in the article of *tithes*, their imperious carriage, and great inattention to morals, are matters that all men understand. On these accounts they enjoy but a small portion of the esteem of the people; and hence, perhaps, in part, arises a disposition to hear dissenting preaching, in almost every place where it is introduced. Whether it arises however from this cause or not, so far as my observation reaches, it is a fact that *there is a far greater disposition to hear dissenting preaching than there formerly was.* I have for some time been in the habit of preaching, on the Lord's day evening, in eight or ten villages round my situation, and never met with any interruption in so doing. The people attend with great decorum, from fifty to five hundred in number; and I have no doubt but such congregations might be obtained in a hundred villages as well as ten, provided ministers could be found that would go and preach to them. Popular prejudice, it is true, was kindled against the dissenters a few years ago, by

the disputes concerning the repeal of *the Corporation and Test Acts*; but this has now very nearly subsided. Men who enter deeply into party prejudices may continue much the same, but the common people think little or nothing about it.

2. That part of the clergy usually termed *evangelical*, may be said to be more in a state of competition with the dissenters than any other; and the number both of preachers and hearers of this description has of late years much encreased. Instead of considering this circumstance however as a matter of regret, many thinking people have rejoiced in it; and that not only on account of its being favourable to the salvation of sinners, but as that which will ultimately, and which does already in measure, befriend the dissenting interest. They collect large auditories, it is true; but they are very rarely composed of persons who leave our congregations. This is not the case however in the country. Their people are generally, and almost entirely, made up of persons who were always in the habit of going to the established places of worship, excepting some who attended nowhere. So far then we lose nothing by them. On the other hand, considerable numbers have been gained by their instrumentality, however contrary it may have been to their inclinations. As the situation of such clergymen is not determined by the choice of the people, it often falls out that after they have laboured in a place for a series of years, they are removed, and succeeded by others of a very different character. The consequence in almost all such cases is, that *the people turn dissenters*. There may be some difference as to the operation of these causes, between large cities and country towns and villages. On the removal of an evangelical clergyman from a parish church, situate in the former, the people may not be under the like necessity to become dissenters as in the latter, seeing they can repair to others in the same city: and where this is the case, they may be more likely to form a party, and keep up a kind of competition with the dissen-

ters. But this is the case chiefly if not entirely in London, and a few other popular places. In the country, which includes the far greater proportion of dissenters, it is otherwise. I am acquainted with several dissenting churches, some of which have principally been raised, and others greatly encreased, by persons coming from under what is termed evangelical preaching in the Church of England.

Similar observations might be made on *the Wesleyan and other Methodists.* It is rare that they gather materials at the expense of the dissenters. But as their hearers become truly religious, and begin to read and think for themselves, they are frequently known, either for the sake of better instruction or a purer discipline, to come off from their societies to ours. If I were inclined to act merely on the principles of a partizan, (which God forbid I should) I would neither fret myself at their prosperity, nor use any underhand means of persuasion to bring them over. There is no need of either: they will come of their own accord, if they are only treated by us as we wish to be treated by them; and the same might be said of the adherents of the evangelical clergy.

3. It may be difficult to ascertain with any tolerable degree of precision, the encrease or decrease of dissenters throughout the nation. I am not competent to decide upon the state of things respecting them, especially in the city of London. Of the country however, that part of it in particular which falls under my own immediate observation, and still more of my own denomination, I think I can form a pretty accurate judgment. In the county where I reside, there are at this time, of one only of the three denominations of dissenters, twenty four congregations. Twenty five years ago, as far as my information extends, there were but seventeen. Three of these have since become extinct, but they consented to dissolve, and afterwards united with other dissenting congregations in the same towns; they are not lost therefore to the dissenting body. In their place ten new congregations have

risen up. Respecting the other fourteen, I believe that none of them have, upon the whole, decreased, and seven of them have doubled, and some of them much more than doubled their number, during the above period.

I do not mention this as a specimen of the whole kingdom. It may not be so in all places. If it were, the encrease of the dissenting interest would be very considerable; but I do suppose that nearly the same things might be said of several other counties, as well as of that where I reside. I cannot give a minute account of any one of them, but I know of many new and large congregations in some neighbouring counties. A respectable minister, of a different denomination from myself, who resides in one of them, lately assured me that he believed the number of dissenters in their county had within the last nine years encreased a thousand.

4. If any estimate might be taken from *the number of places of worship* which have been raised within the last five and twenty years, I suppose there must be a considerable encrease. It is true they have not all been new congregations, but a considerable number of them have. It is not by these as it is by an encrease of buildings in general, in large cities and trading places. These may be accounted for without supposing an encreasing population. An encrease of wealth, though there should be no alteration as to the number of the people, will produce an encrease of buildings. Add to this, that the *enclosing* system, having been carried to a greater extent during the present reign than in any former period, multitudes have been driven from the occupations of husbandry, and other employments dependent upon it, to settle in cities, or large trading and manufacturing towns; by means of which the buildings in those places are of course encreased. I know of no causes which will equally account for the encrease of places of worship, and therefore am inclined to think it implies an encrease of the number of worshippers.

These are a few, and possibly but a few of the mediums by which we may judge of the *fact*. Persons of more extensive information may perhaps add to their number, and throw additional light upon the subject. Yet even from these alone, I am strongly inclined to think that *the Dissenting Interest, upon the whole, is not on the decline.*

DECLINE OF THE DISSENTING INTEREST.

PART II.

In a former paper I offered a few reasons for doubting whether the Dissenting Interest be upon the whole in a state of decline. I admit however, that some part of it is so; and the design of this paper is to enquire into the reasons or causes of it.

I have carefully looked over a sketch of a sermon on this subject, which appeared in June last, and greatly approve many of the remarks of the worthy author. Indeed there is nothing in his performance but what I do approve, except his passing over matters of a doctrinal nature, and confining his recommendations merely to those of conduct. What I have therefore to offer may be considered as an addition to his remarks.

"I am not such an enemy to innovation," any more than your correspondent, "as to think every principle false which does not exactly accord with the creed of our forefathers, but can easily conceive that in the course of several years, in which this kingdom has been favoured with the use of the sacred writings, some light may have been thrown upon some controverted points." Neither

do I think, that because various points have been disputed since their time, we must need be nearer the truth than they were; but on the contrary, that it is very possible we may by such blasts as have been suffered to blow upon the church, have been moved in a degree from the purity of the gospel.

Though we have a right to deviate from our ancestors, provided we can prove them to be in the wrong; yet, if the dissenting interest prospered in their hands, and has declined in ours, it affords a presumption at least, that they were not in the wrong, and that a change of principles has been made to a disadvantage. It is a fact sufficiently notorious, that the leading doctrines of the great body of the Puritans and Nonconformists were,—the fall and depravity of human nature, the deity and atonement of Christ, justification by faith in his righteousness, and regeneration and sanctification by the agency of the Holy Spirit.—Now it is not for the sake of "retailing the calumnies of our enemies," but from a serious concern for the welfare of the dissenting interest, that I ask, *Is it not a fact equally notorious, that a large proportion of those dissenting congregations which are evidently in a state of declension, have either deserted the foregoing doctrines, or hold communion with those who have?* I hope I need not repeat, what has so often been said by others, that there is something in these doctrines which interests the hearts and consciences of men, very differently from a mere harangue on the beauty, excellency, and advantages of virtue; or from any other kind of preaching, where they are omitted.

What is the reason that the generality of the parish churches are so thinly attended? Is it any violation of christian charity to answer, because the generality of the clergy do not preach the doctrine of the cross. There is nothing in their preaching that interests the hearts, or reaches the consciences of the people. They have 'rejected the knowledge of God, and God hath rejected them from being priests to him.' Hos. iv. 6. They are uncon-

cerned about the souls of the people, and the people perceive it, and are not concerned to attend upon their ministry. The same causes will produce the same effects, whether out of the establishment or in it.

If we have rejected the *atonement* of Christ, it is not difficult to prove that we reject the doctrine of the cross, which is the grand doctrine that God hath blessed, and will bless to the salvation of men. If we reject the *deity* of Christ besides relinquishing the worship of him, which was manifestly a primitive practice, and withdrawn all well-founded *trust* in him for the salvation of our souls; we reject the only ground upon which an atonement can be supported, and by resting all its efficacy upon divine appointment, render it '*possible* that the blood of bulls or of goats, or the ashes of a heifer, might have taken away sin.' Heb. x. 4. If we reject the doctrine of *justification by faith* in the righteousness of Christ, we are on a footing with those jews, who 'attained not to the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone.' And if we reject the doctrine of *regeneration* and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, we need not expect him to set his seal to our labours.

There are some amongst us who do not reject these doctrines, but who nevertheless *hold christian fellowship with those that do;* and this, if I mistake not, will tend greatly to undermine their spiritual prosperity. Let no man be persecuted for his religious sentiments, not even an infidel or an atheist:* but persecution is one thing, and declining to hold christian communion with them is another. Socinians are more consistent than some who would be accounted moderate Calvinists. They plead for a separate communion; and a separate communion they ought to have. The ills which arise from a contrary

* The author appears afterwards to have entertained a different opinion, and to have admitted in conversation, that atheism and gross infidelity might be punished by the civil magistrate. Ed.

practice are more than a few. If you admit into your communion, say four or five individuals, who reject the foregoing doctrines, you cannot, without appearing to insult those whom you have acknowledged as christian brethren, dwell upon them in the ordinary course of your ministry. Generally speaking, there will be a bar to pulpit freedom; and you must either displease your friends, or hold the leading principles of the gospel as though you held them not.

I have no desire that any doctrine should be insisted upon in a litigious manner, or so as to supersede any other doctrine or duty of christianity. But there are principles which ought to form the prominent feature of, I had almost said, all our discourses. It is a poor excuse for a christian minister to make for his omitting in some way or other to introduce Christ, that *his subject did not lead to it.** There is not an important subject in divinity, either doctrinal or practical, but what bears an intimate relation to him. And I must say, if any of these important doctrines are withheld, as being of little importance, or because there are individuals in the congregation who disapprove of them, a blast will assuredly follow our labours.

Much has been said in favour of what is termed *liberality*, and enlargedness of heart: but perhaps it may not have occurred to some, that the christian doctrine of enlargement differs widely from that which is generally inculcated in the present age. 'Oh ye Corinthians,' says the apostle, 'our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same—be ye also enlarged.' And to what means does the apostle direct, for the accomplishment of so desirable

* When this excuse was one day pleaded by a minister whom Mr. Fuller had just been hearing, he asked the preacher whether there was a town or village anywhere in England, that had not a road leading to London. Ed.

an object? Does he desire them to extend their communion? Not so: but to contract it.—'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial, and what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' 2 Cor. vi. 11—15.

This direction may to some persons appear highly paradoxical, yet it is founded in the reason and nature of things. For—(1) Christian enlargement depends upon 'fellowship, communion, concord,' and a mutual participation of spiritual interests. If only a single stranger enter into a society, there is at once a bar to freedom; and if a number of them be admitted, a general silence, or what is next to silence, ensues. The company may be enlarged, but their communion is 'straitened.'—(2) A union in christian fellowship with improper persons, tends to impede the progress of good men in the divine life. It is, as the apostle supposes, like the 'yoking' of a sprightly horse to a tardy ass: the latter will be certain to obstruct the activity and usefulness of the former.—(3) By such unions good men are frequently drawn into a sinful conformity to the world. The company we keep will ever have an influence upon our minds and affections, and will tend to transform us in a measure into the same likeness.

It may be objected, that the apostle does not here forbid them to have fellowship with professed christians of different sentiments, but with avowed unbelievers, or 'infidels.' This is true: but the general principle upon which he proceeds is applicable, not merely to fellowship with professed unbelievers, but with nominal christians of certain descriptions. This principle is, *that christian enlargement is not accomplished by extending our connections, but by confining them to persons with whom we can have fellowship, communion, concord, and a mutual participation of spiritual interests.* There are few persons of serious reflection, but who have seen and lamented the effects of a

union between certain good men in the national establishment, and others of a very different character; with whom, on account of their continuing in the church, they are in the habit of associating. They are all professed christians, and all unite together at the Lord's supper; but there is no more foundation for christian fellowship, than if the one were what they are, and the other avowed infidels. Some of these good men, it is true, withdraw from all intimate acquaintance with persons even in their own communion who do not discover a love to the gospel, and form their acquaintance amongst those who do: but others have been carried away, and drawn into measures highly dishonourable to their christian character, and injurious to their usefulness in the cause of God. Now the same reasoning will hold good, out of the church as well as in it. If we form religious connections with persons in whom there is no proper foundation for 'fellowship, communion, concord,' and a mutual participation of spiritual interests, we in so doing become 'straitened' rather than 'enlarged.'

Much has been said in favour of *unity of affection, without a unity in principle.* But such affection, if it can exist, is very different from any thing inculcated by the gospel. Christian affection is 'for the truth sake that dwelleth in us.' It does not appear to me however that it can exist. From any thing that I have felt in myself, or observed in others, I cannot perceive any such thing as unity amongst men, except in proportion as they possess a congeniality of principles and pursuits. It is not possible in the nature of things, that 'two can walk together except they be agreed.' They may not indeed be agreed in *all things*; but so far as they disagree, so far there is a want of union; and the ground of affection between them, is not those things wherein they are at variance, but those things wherein they are agreed. It argues great inattention to the human mind and its operations, to suppose that there can be affection, unless it be merely that of good-will, where there is no agreement.

Those who plead for such affection are as much united in society by agreement in sentiment as other people, only *that* sentiment may be of a different kind. They may set aside an agreement in the great principles of the gospel as a ground of union, but they are certain to substitute something else in their place. They have their fundamentals, and circumstantials, as well as other people. Whatever things they are which deeply interest the mind, whether they be things evangelical, or things political; things which relate to doctrine, or things which affect the order, form, and discipline of the church; these are our fundamentals, and in these we shall ever require an agreement, while other things are dispensed with as matters of less importance.

I am a dissenter, and a rigid regard to Christ's kingly authority is in my esteem a sacred thing. For all the honours and emoluments in the establishment, I would not pollute my conscience by subscribing to its common prayer, or conforming to its unscriptural ceremonies. Yet I do not consider my dissent as the chief thing in religion. So to consider it would in my judgment be making it an idol; and if this were general, the dissenting interest would cease to be the interest of Christ. But I am persuaded that, at present, this is not the case. May those things which are amiss amongst us be the objects of our attention, that we may not only repent, and do our first works, but strengthen the things which remain, and which are ready to die.

STATE OF DISSENTING DISCIPLINE.

1803.

It may be difficult to determine whether the apostles of our Lord, in the first planting of Christianity, were more intent on the conversion of unbelievers, or the building up of believers in their most holy faith. It is certain that both these objects engaged their attention.

In our times they have been thought to be too much divided. Towards the middle of the last century, several eminent men were raised up in the established church, whose labours were singularly useful in turning sinners to God: but whether it was from the advantages of their situation as churchmen, or whatever was the cause, they and others, who since their times have been a kind of half dissenters, have generally been considered as neglecting to form their societies after the model of the new testament. And congregations of this description having considerably encreased, apprehensions have been entertained, that the order and discipline of the scriptures would in time fall into general disuse.

From a somewhat earlier date, many amongst protestant dissenters, too much attentive perhaps to the points on which they separated from the church, and from one another, began to neglect the common salvation, and to render the general theme of their ministrations something other than Christ crucified. Even many of those who retained the doctrines of their forefathers, preached them in so cold and formal a way, that the spirit of vital religion seemed to be fled. Hence many serious people forsook them in favour of a more lively and evangelical ministry, even though unaccompanied with the discipline and government to which they had been used. Hence

arose mutual jealousies, and the distinction of *regular* and *irregular* dissenters.

Such alas is the contractedness of the human mind, that while attending to one thing, it is ever in danger of neglecting others of equal if not superior importance. It is a fact which cannot be denied, that many who have exhibited the common salvation with great success to the unconverted, have at the same time been sadly negligent in enforcing the legislative authority of Christ upon their hearers: nor is it less manifest, that others who have been the most tenacious of the forms of church government and discipline, have at the same time been wofully deficient in preaching the gospel to the unconverted.

But is it not possible to *unite* these important objects, at least in a good degree, in the manner in which they were united in the primitive times? One should think it were as natural for a minister, and a people, where God is pleased to bless the word to the conversion of sinners, to be anxious for their edification, as parents who are blessed with a numerous offspring, to be concerned to have them properly fed, and clothed, and educated. It is not enough that a company of christians unite in a preacher, and make a point of going once or twice in the week to hear him, and after having exchanged compliments with him, and a few of the people, depart till another sabbath. That bids fair to be the true scriptural form of church government, which tends most to promote brotherly love; which brings the members into the closest religious contact, and which is accompanied with the greatest faithfulness one towards another.

DISCIPLINE OF THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH BAPTIST CHURCHES.

Extracts from two letters to Mr. M'Lean, in 1796.

As to our churches, it would be very wrong to plead on their behalf, that they come up to the primitive model. It is our great endeavour as ministers, (and we are joined by a good number of private christians) to form them in doctrine, in discipline, in spirit, and in conduct, after the example of Christ and his apostles. But after all that we can do, if reviewed by the great Head of the church, and perhaps by some of his servants who may be unconnected with us, there would be a few, or rather, not 'a few things against us.'

Till of late, I conceive, there was such a portion of erroneous *doctrine*, and false religion amongst us, that if we had carried matters a little farther, we should have been a very dunghill in society. Nor can this leaven be expected to be yet purged out, though I hope it is in a fair way of being so.

In *discipline* there is a great propensity, in some churches especially, to be lax and negligent. In our annual associations we have been necessitated to remonstrate against this negligence, and to declare that, unless they would execute the laws of Christ upon disorderly walkers, we would withdraw from all connection with them: and such remonstrances from the associated churches, have produced a good effect. It is not our practice however, lightly to separate from churches or individuals. We consider the churches of Corinth and Galatia, and the great patience of the apostle amidst the most scandalous disorders; labouring to reclaim those whom others of less patience would have given up, and

separated from; and wish as far as possible to follow the example.

Your observations on the difficulty of reforming an old church are very just, and on its being better in some cases to begin by a new formation. In this way we have proceeded in some places. Carey, for example, when he went to Leicester, found them a very corrupt people. The very officers of the church had indulged in drunkenness, and the rest were discouraged; and so discipline was wholly neglected. After advising with his brethren in the ministry, brother Carey and the majority of the church agreed to renew covenant. Accordingly they appointed a day, in which they would consider their former relation as extinct, and the church book should be open for the signatures of all who had heretofore been members, but upon this condition, that they subscribed at the same time a solemn declaration,—That they would in future execute and be subject to a strict and faithful discipline.

This measure had its effect. Almost all their loose characters stood out: or if any signed, they were subject to a close watch in future. By these means the church was purged; and Carey, before he went to India, saw the good effects of it. A considerable revival in religion ensued, and many were added. Hence you may account for his language afterwards to the church at Leicester.*

It is a great fault in some of our churches, that they seem afraid to execute faithful discipline upon men of opulence. 'The *cause*, they say, cannot be supported without them.' To this I have more than once replied, That a cause which requires to be thus supported, cannot be the cause of Christ; and your business is not to support the ark with unhallowed hands. If by executing Christ's laws, *your* cause sinks, so be it; he will never blame you for that.

Another evil akin to this, is, a partiality for men of

* Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission, vol. i. p. 132.

opulence, in the choice of *deacons*. I consider not property, but the use that is made of it, as entitling to religious regard. We do not fail publicly and privately to inculcate these things: but habits of this kind are not instantly, nor easily eradicated.

You observe that "the Commission of Christ is not fully executed, unless the converts are taught to observe 'all things, whatsoever he hath commanded;' and are brought into such a state of separation from the world, and of union and order among themselves, after the model of the apostolic churches, as puts them in a capacity for doing so."

To the whole of this I freely subscribe, whether we have attained to such a state of things or not. My views, and those of my brethren, are much the same as are expressed in Mr. Booth's 'Essay on the Kingdom of Christ.' I am not conscious but that it is my aim to inculcate and practise all 'things, whatsoever our Lord hath commanded.' Some of Christ's commands however, I suppose, we interpret differently from you. If I am rightly informed, you consider 'the washing of feet, the kiss of charity &c.,' as formally binding on all christians: we do not. We consider neither of them as *religious* institutes, but merely civil customs, though used by Christ and his apostles to a religious end, as whatsoever they did, they did all to the glory of God. They were in use both among jews and heathens, long before the coming of Christ. The one was a necessary service, the other a mode of expressing kindness. We conceive it was the design of Christ by these forms to enjoin a natural interchange of kind and beneficent offices, even so as 'by love to serve one another.' The usual forms of expressing this temper of mind were at that time, and in those countries, washing the feet &c. Christ therefore made use of these forms, much the same as he made use of the customary language of a country, to convey his doctrines and precepts. But as neither of these forms are ordinarily used in our age and country, to express the ideas for which they were

originally enjoined, the ground or reason of the injunction ceases; a literal compliance with them would not now answer the original design, but would operate, we conceive, in a very different way. It seems to us therefore, not only lawful but incumbent, to substitute such signs and forms as are adapted to convey the *spirit* of the injunction, rather than to abide by the letter, since that is become as it were 'a dead letter;' as much so as to disuse the original language of scripture, and translate it into a language that can be understood. Herein we think we follow Christ's example; he used the forms and customs of his country, to express kindness and humility; and we do the same. Whether we understand these commands however, or not, according to the mind of Christ, I hope, and for myself am certain, that we do not live in the known violation of them.

The grounds on which *you* plead for the washing of feet, I should have no objection to. If you will come and see me, and it be any refreshment to you, I will cheerfully wash yours; and not yours only, but if the meanest christian needed it, I do not feel that it would at all hurt my pride to gratify him. I have pride, as well as other sins, but I think it does not operate in that way. My objection to the kiss of charity, is not that it is become so obsolete that people would not understand it as a token of affection, but being confined in England to express the affection of relations, or of the sexes, it would be understood accordingly. Let such salutations therefore be ever so pure in themselves, we should not be able to 'abstain from the appearance of evil;' and many scandals and reproaches would be raised.

I have carefully, and if I know my own spirit, candidly examined the new testament, concerning the *time* of administering the Lord's supper. The result is, that I consider it as wholly *discretional*, as much so as the times for various other duties. Such is the form of institution, as repeated by Paul. 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. 'This do ye, *as oft* as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For *as often*

as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.' If any thing can be gathered from Acts ii. 42, which says, that the disciples 'continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and *in breaking of bread,* and in prayers;' it is, that it was done as often as they met together for worship; but this was much *oftener* than once a week; for they 'continued *daily* with one accord in the temple, and the Lord added to them *daily* such as should be saved:' ver. 46, 47. From Acts xx. 7 we learn, that 'the disciples came together to break bread, on the *first* day of the week;' but it does not follow that this was their practice on every such first day. It might be so; but as Christ left the matter open, I suppose they acted accordingly. At Jerusalem, soon after the pentecost, it seems to me that they did it *oftener* than once a week; afterwards they *might* do it once a week. But if Christ has not fixed it, neither should we, lest we go beyond the rule appointed us.

I think few can have a greater dislike to *titles* than I have among ministers. That of 'brother' is most agreeable to me. My brother Ryland, without his own knowledge, desire, or consent, had a D. D. next to forced upon him. It was announced by Rippon in his Register, and then people would call him by it; but I am persuaded he would much rather not have had it. He is a very humble, godly man, and he now submits to it, because he would not always be employed in resisting a piece of insignificance. For my part I think with you, but do not know whether any of my brethren think with me, that it is contrary to our Lord's prohibition: 'Be ye not called Rabbi.'

As to Academical education, the far greater part of our ministers have it not. Carey was a shoemaker, years after he engaged in the ministry; and I was a farmer. I have sometimes however regretted my want of learning. On the other hand, brother Sutcliffe, and brother Pearce, have both been at Bristol. We all live in love, without any distinction in these matters. We do not consider an

academy as any qualification for membership or preaching, any farther than as a person may there improve his talents. Those who go to our academies must be members of a church, and recommended to them as possessing gifts adapted to the ministry. They preach about the neighbourhood all the time, and their going is considered in no other light, than as a young minister might apply to an aged one for improvement. Since brother Ryland has been at Bristol, I think he has been a great blessing, in forming the principles and spirit of the young men. I allow however, that the contrary is often the case in academies, and that when it is so, they prove very injurious to the churches of Christ.

STATE OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Of these there were twenty three, in the year 1813, besides three or four small societies, whose circumstances were either unknown to the writer, or whose principles were not generally approved. On the state of the regular churches in this county, Mr. Fuller offered the following remarks, with the view of eliciting farther enquiry into the state of the baptist denomination in other counties, and throughout the kingdom.

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1. Out of these twenty three churches, nineteen are in villages, and four in market towns. Eleven are in connection with the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire Association; the other twelve are in no Association. The average number of members in each church is about seventy, and of hearers about three hundred.

2. There are no two of them which meet for worship in the same village or town, in consequence of any division

among themselves. Such things may be borne with in some instances, rather than worse; but they are not among the things which are lovely and of good report. Such things have existed among these churches, but they exist no longer.

3. There are only three which meet for worship in towns where there are Independent congregations, or any other preaching which is ordinarily considered as evangelical; and those are places so populous as to furnish no just ground of complaint on the score of opposition. If our object therefore had been to encrease our number from other evangelical connections, rather than by conversions from the world, we have acted very unwisely in fixing on the places where we should take our stand. It is acknowledged that many members of pedobaptist churches have joined us, in consequence of their being convinced of believers' baptism being the only baptism taught and exemplified in the scriptures; and that many of our members owe their first religious impressions to the labours of a Hervey, a Maddox, and other evangelical clergymen, whose names are dear to them, and to us all. But the number of persons of both these descriptions fall short of that of persons who have been in the habit of attending our worship, or have come over to us from the ranks of the irreligious.

4. Of those who are not in the Association, three or four are what are called high Calvinists, holding the doctrines of election and predestination in such a way as to exclude exhortations and invitations to the ungodly to believe in Christ for salvation. The *rest*, whether in or out of the association, consider these doctrines as consistent with exhortations and invitations, as the means by which the predestined ends are accomplished. There are individuals of a different mind in the other churches: for we distinguish between high Calvinists and Antinomians: with the former we do not refuse communion, but with the latter we do.

5. The greater part of these churches are not of very long standing. In 1689, when a meeting of the elders

and messengers of more than one hundred baptist churches was held in London, there were no messengers from this county. It does not follow that there were no baptist churches in the county, but they certainly were very few and small. Half the present number at least, have been raised within the last fifty years; and many of those which were raised before, have much more than doubled their number since that period. The average clear encrease of those churches in the county which are in the association, during the above period, is about seventy five; and probably the clear encrease of the churches not associated, would be much the same. Several of those which are now flourishing churches, were formerly small societies; some of them branches of other churches, supplied principally by gifted brethren, not wholly devoted to the ministry, but labouring with their hands for their own maintenance, and that of their families.

6. If such has been the progress of things during the last fifty years, what may we not hope for in fifty years to come? Were the number of these churches even to continue stationary, during that period; and were nothing reckoned on but a diligent perseverance in the stated means of grace, only including occasional labours in adjacent villages, reckoning three generations to a century; a testimony will have been borne in each of them to a thousand, and in all of them to three and twenty thousand souls. And if on an average they may be supposed to contain fifty truly christian people—for though we admit none but those who profess and appear to be such, yet it cannot be expected that all are what they profess to be—each church will have reared seventy five, and altogether seventeen hundred and twenty five plants for the heavenly paradise.

But surely we need not calculate on their remaining stationary. If genuine christianity does but live among them, it will both 'grow and multiply.' If it multiply only in the same proportion as it has done in the last half century, in respect to the number of churches, and of

members in each church, it will encrease considerably more than fourfold; and if from each of these churches should proceed only three or four faithful and useful ministers of the gospel; if especially there should arise among them, only now and then, 'a fruitful bough'—say a Thomas, a Carey, a Marshman, a Ward, a Chamberlain, or a Chater—'whose branches run over the wall' of christendom itself: who can calculate the fruits? From a part of these churches, connected in association with others in the adjacent counties, within the last twenty years, has 'sounded forth the word of the Lord,' into the very heart of heathen and mahomedan Asia; and as the times foretold in prophecy, when 'a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation,' appear to be fast approaching, it behoves us not only to "attempt," but also to "expect great things."

Our chief concern should be, that we may not disqualify ourselves for possessing these lively hopes by a relinquishment of the doctrine, the worship, the discipline, the spirit, or the practice of vital christianity. That God's 'way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations,' our prayer should be, 'God be merciful unto *us*, and bless *us*, and cause thy face to shine upon *us*.' We cannot impart that which we do not possess.

I have seen in those churches with which I have been most intimately connected, many things which have endeared them to me. Particularly, a lively interest in evangelical, faithful, practical, and pungent preaching; an attention to things more than to words; a taste for the affectionate more than for the curious; a disposition to read and think rather than dispute; a spirit to promote the kingdom of Christ: in fine, a modesty, gentleness, and kindness of behaviour. I have been thirty years pastor of one of them; and if there has ever been an instance of unkind or unchristian behaviour towards me, I have forgotten it.

These things I have seen in some of our churches, and would fain consider them as the general feature. But

truth obliges me to add, I have also seen things of another description. I have seen discipline neglected, apparently lest it should injure the subscription; and if exercised, it has seemed to be more from regard to reputation in the eyes of men, than from the fear of God. I have seen an evil in the choice of ministers; too much attention has been paid to the superficial qualification of a ready off-hand address, calculated to fill the place, and too little to those solid qualities that constitute the man of God, and the serious, faithful, and affectionate pastor. I have also seen, or thought I have seen, in the choice of deacons, more regard paid to opulence than to those qualifications required by the new testament. I have seen too much of a worldly spirit, and a conformity to the maxims by which worldly men are wont to regulate their conduct.

I do not know that such things are more prevalent in these than in other churches; but wherever they prevail, they will be a worm at the root of the gourd. It becomes us as ministers to enquire, whether a large portion of these evils may not originate amongst us. If we were more spiritual, evangelical, and zealous in the work of God, things would be different with the people. We are apt to think that if we have but made up our minds on the leading points of controversy afloat in the world, and taken the side of truth, we are safe; but it is not so. If we walk not with God, we shall almost be certain in some way to get aside from the gospel, and then the work of God will not prosper in our hands. Ingenious discourses may be delivered, and nothing advanced inconsistent with the gospel, while yet the gospel itself is not preached. We may preach *about* Christ himself, and yet not 'preach Christ.' We may pride ourselves in our orthodoxy, and yet be far from the doctrine of the new testament; may hold with exhortations and invitations to the unconverted, and yet not 'persuade men;' may plead for sound doctrine, and yet overlook the things that 'become' sound doctrine. Finally, we may advocate the cause of holiness, while we ourselves are unholy.

IMPORTANCE OF A LIVELY FAITH,

Especially in Missionary undertakings.

Written in 1799.

I HAVE been a good deal impressed with a persuasion, that in our missionary undertakings, both at home and abroad, we shall not be remarkably successful, unless we enter deeply into the spirit of the primitive christians; particularly with respect to faith in the divine promises. I am apprehensive that we are all deficient in this grace, and therefore presume that a few hints on the subject may not be unseasonable.

When Israel went out of Egypt, they greatly rejoiced on the shores of the red sea; but the greater part of them entered not into the promised land, and that on account of their unbelief. The resemblance between their case and ours, has struck my mind with considerable force. The grand *object* of their undertaking was to root out idolatry, and to establish the knowledge and worship of the one living and true God: and such also is ours. The *authority* on which they acted was, the sovereign command of heaven; and ours is the same. 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature.' The *ground* on which they were to rest their hope of success was, the divine promise. It was by relying on this alone, that they were enabled to surmount difficulties, and to encounter their gigantic enemies. Those amongst them who believed, like Joshua and Caleb, felt themselves well able to go up: but they that distrusted the promise turned their backs in the hour of danger. Such also is the ground of our hope. He who hath commissioned us to 'teach all nations,' hath added, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the

world.' The heathen nations are given to our Redeemer for an inheritance, as much as Canaan was given to the seed of Abraham; and it is our business, as it was theirs, to go up and possess the land. We should lay our account with difficulties as well as they; but according to our faith in the divine promises, we may expect these mountains to become a plain. If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into the land: but if, like the unbelieving Israelites, we make light of the promised good, or magnify the difficulties in the way of obtaining it, and so relax our efforts, we may expect to die as it were in the wilderness.

It is true, there are some differences between their case and ours; but they are wholly in our favour. We are not, like them, going to possess countries for ourselves, but for Christ. They went armed with the temporal sword, we with the sword of the Spirit; they were commissioned in justice to destroy men's lives, we in mercy to save their souls; they sought not them but theirs, we seek not theirs but them. Now, by how much our cause exceeds theirs in the magnitude and beneficence of its object, by so much the more shall we incur the frowns of heaven, if we fail of accomplishing it through unbelief.

On a certain occasion 'the disciples said unto the Lord, encrease our faith;' and it is worth while to consider what that occasion was. Luke xvii. 3—6. There was a hard duty enjoined, to forgive lamented injuries, even though committed seven times in a day. The apostles very properly turn the injunction into a petition, praying for great grace to enable them to discharge so difficult a duty. They said unto the Lord, 'encrease our faith.' But why ask for an encrease of faith? Possibly *we* might have said, Lord encrease our love, our self-denial, or our patience. Asking for an encrease of faith, was asking for an encrease of every other grace; this being a kind of first wheel that sets the rest in motion. Our Lord's answer intimates that they had chosen a right petition;

for faith, even in a small degree, will enable us to surmount great difficulties; difficulties, the surmounting of which, is as the removal of mountains. The passage taken in its connection, teaches us *the efficacy of faith in discharging duties, and surmounting difficulties.*

Where there is no faith in the truths and promises of the gospel, there is no heart for duty: and where it is very low and defective in its exercises, there is but little spiritual activity. If a good man be entangled in sceptical doubts respecting the truth of the gospel, or any of its leading doctrines, he will, during that time, be not only unhappy in his own mind, but of little use to others. He admits, that God used in former ages to hear the prayers and succeed the labours of his servants, and that there will be times in which great things will again be wrought for the church. But of late, and especially in the present age, he imagines we are not to expect any thing remarkable. This is no other than a spice of that atheistical spirit which said, 'The Lord hath forsaken the earth, he regardeth not man;' the effect of which is, an indifference to every exercise and enterprise of a religious nature. Faith operates as a stimulus, unbelief as a palsy.

If faith in divine truths and promises be low, though we should be drawn in with others to engage in religious enterprises, yet we shall not follow them up with ardent prayer, or look for the blessing of God with that earnest expectation which generally presedes the bestowment of it. Instead of forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we shall be in danger of resting satisfied in present attainments, and so of losing the things which we have wrought, for want of following up the work to which we have set our hands.

All the great things that have been wrought in the church of God, have been accomplished by this principle. It was by *faith* that the worthies 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped

the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens.' It was by *faith* that the apostles and primitive christians went forth as sheep among wolves, and at the expense of all that was dear to them on earth, carried the gospel into all nations. Wherever they went they were previously persuaded, that they should go in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ: and it was so. God always caused them to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge by them in every place. Could we but imbibe this spirit, surely we should be able, in some good degree, to say so too. 'Believe in the Lord our God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.'

But why is it, that God should thus honour the exercise of faith? Is it not because faith is a grace that peculiarly honours him? We cannot do greater dishonour to a person of kind and generous intentions than by thinking ill of him, and acting towards him on the ground of such evil thoughts. It was thus that the slothful servant thought and acted towards his lord. On the other hand we cannot do greater honour to a character of the above description, than by thinking well of him, and placing the most unreserved confidence in all he says. Any man who had a just regard to honour, would in such a case feel a strong inducement to answer the expectations which were entertained of him. And God himself hath condescended to intimate something like the same thing. 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' In believing his word we think well of him, and he takes pleasure in answering such expectations; proving thereby that we have thought justly concerning him. It was on this principle that our Lord usually conferred the blessings of miraculous healing, in answer to the faith of the patient, or of those that accompanied him. 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. According to your faith be it unto you.'

AGREEMENT IN SENTIMENT THE BOND OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

An original Letter to the Rev. Samuel Palmer of Hackney, in 1796.

I HAVE no partiality, certainly, for the Established Church. I believe it will come down, because it is inimical to the kingdom of Christ: yet I respect many churchmen, and shall not refuse preaching in their pulpits, provided I may go on in my own way. Mr. Eyre pressed me to preach for him; and by complying with his request, I materially served the mission.

As to *dissenters*, I consider a dissent from the church of England, or any other church, as affording no proper ground of religious union. The thing itself is merely negative. As dissenters we are not necessarily united in any thing, except that *we do not approve of the church establishment.* We may be enemies to the government of God, and the gospel of Christ; yea, we may be avowed infidels, and yet hold this. I therefore have no notion of throwing what little weight I may possess into the dissenting scale, merely *as such*; though, if other things were equal, I should certainly do so. These remarks have no respect to my conduct at Hackney, but are in answer to what you say on that subject in general.

The doubts which I expressed respecting your sentiments, arose from no one's insinuations, but from reading a pamphlet which you published some years ago. It may now be fourteen years since I read it; but I then thought it too much in favour of indifference to what I esteemed important truth. Since then, you know, we have conversed together; and from the whole I was inclined to hope, that your regard to what I accounted evangelical sentiments was greater than I had supposed it to be. And the general approbation which you have

since bestowed upon my Letters on Socinianism left me no reason to doubt, that whatever might be your speculations on the modus of the divine subsistence, you did not reject either the atonement of Christ, or his proper divinity. If I had reason to believe of any man, that he did not call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, or rely upon his atoning sacrifice for acceptance with God, I could not acknowledge him as a christian brother, or pay him any respect in a religious way. But by whomsoever these great truths are cordially admitted, I trust it will ever be the desire of my heart to pray on their behalf with the apostle, Grace and peace be with them!

Now however you inform me, that you "*reject* no doctrine from any dislike to it." But if I were satisfied that the worship of Christ is idolatry, I think I ought to reject it with abhorrence. I imagine however you mean, that supposing you are mistaken in any of these matters, it is not from any bias of heart, but from mere mistake. I own that I dare not say so, respecting any mistakes of which I may be the subject. I reckon that such is the perspicuity of God's word, that if I err on any important truth, or precept, it must be owing to some evil bias to which I am subject, though I am unhappily blinded to it.

You have "no precise ideas of the person of Christ, and you suppose that I have none." We may neither of us fully comprehend that mysterious subject; yet you will admit that there is a material difference between the ideas of one who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and one who does not, but considers him as merely a fellow creature.

You "despise the man who cannot maintain a brotherly connection with another, because he thinks for himself." I wish every man to think for himself, and also to act for himself; but if in the exercise of this right he thinks the Son of God an impostor, and his doctrine a lie; or lives in the violation of his commands; I think myself not only entitled but bound to withhold all brotherly connection with him, of a religious nature; not because he thinks or

acts *for himself*, but because in my judgment (and *my* judgment must be the rule of *my* conduct) he thinks and acts *wrong*. We may think and act for ourselves, and yet do both in such a way as shall subject us to the just abhorrence of every friend of truth and righteousness. The worst of beings thinks for himself: 'when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh *of his own*.'

You "do not desire the friendship of any one who makes a similarity of opinion the condition of it." I am not fond of calling the great articles of my faith "opinions." Faith and opinion are different things. If you mean *sentiment*, I acknowledge I *do* desire the friendship of many who make a similarity in the one the condition of the other, and am willing they should ask me any question they think proper concerning my faith. Nay, I may say farther, I wish to be on terms of religious friendship with no man, unless he be a friend to what I consider as the first principles of the oracles of God. Nor can I persuade myself that you, notwithstanding your strong language, will "despise" me on that account. If it be so however, I must bear it as well as I can.

Christian love appears to me to be, 'for the truth sake that dwelleth in us.' Every kind of union that has not truth for its bond, is of no value in the sight of God, and ought to be of none in ours.

You tell me, "there are those who consider *me* as unsound in other doctrines, but this does not diminish your regard for me." Perhaps not: it were rather singular to suppose it should. You have too much good sense, sir, to disregard me for what *other people think of me*. But if you *yourself* thought me unsound, you would; or at least, I should say, you ought; and perhaps it may make you smile, if I add, I should think the worse of you if you did not. As to *others*, who may think me unsound, I imagine they do not as such regard me; nay, I hope for their sakes, that so far they disregard me. I may think they misjudge me, and may wish to set them right. I may think ill of their sentiments, as they do of mine; but

while they judge me unsound, I neither expect nor desire their approbation. I had rather they should disesteem me, than pretend to esteem me in a religious way, irrespective of my religious principles. All the esteem that I desire of you, sir, or of any man, towards me, is for the truth that in your judgment dwelleth in me, and operateth in a way of righteousness.

I have heard a great deal of *union without sentiment*; but I can neither feel nor perceive any such thing, either in myself or others. All the union that I can feel or perceive, arises from *a similarity of views and pursuits.* No two persons may think exactly alike; but so far as they are unlike, so far there is a want of union. We are united to God himself by becoming of one mind and one heart with him. Consider the force and design of Amos iii. 3. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' You might live neighbourly with Dr. Priestley, but you would not feel so united with him in heart, as if he had been of your sentiments; nor he with you, as if you had been of his. You may esteem a churchman, if he agree with you in doctrine, and be of an amiable disposition; but you would feel much more united with him, if in addition to this he were a dissenter. You may regard some men who are rigid Calvinists, on some considerations; but you would regard them more, if they were what you account more liberal in their views, and more moderate towards others who differ from them; that is, if they were *of your mind* upon the doctrine of christian forbearance.

Men of one age may have quarrelled about religious differences, and have persecuted one another, as papists and protestants have done in France; and the same descriptions of men in another age may despise these litigations, as the French have lately done, and not care at all whether a man be papist or protestant, provided he enters heartily into revolutionary principles. But all this arises from their having substituted the importance of an agreement in a political creed, in the place of one that is reli-

gious. Agreement in sentiment and pursuit is still the bond of union.—Even those who unite in church fellowship, upon the principle of what they term *free enquiry*, or universal toleration, are in *that* principle agreed: and this is the bond of their union. They consider this as the all in all, and consent to exercise forbearance towards each other in every thing else. Such a communion, I confess, appears to me just as scriptural and as rational as if a number of persons should agree to worship together, but consent that every one should be at liberty to *act* as he thought proper, and so admit the universal toleration of every species of immorality. Nevertheless, even here, a similarity of sentiments would be the bond of union.

You can unite with men "who are not exactly of your sentiments"—So can I—But that in which I unite with them, is not any thing in which sentiment has no concern. It is *that wherein we are agreed* that is the bond of our union; and those things wherein we differ are considered as objects of *forbearance*, on account of human imperfection. Such forbearance ought undoubtedly to be exercised in a degree, especially in things which both sides must admit to be not clearly revealed; which are properly called Opinions; and are little other than mere speculations. And even in things which in our judgment *are* clearly revealed, there ought to be a degree of forbearance; much in the same way as we forbear with each other's imperfections of a practical nature, where the essential principles of morality are not affected.

You are "not a party man, and hope you never shall be, to please any set of people whatever." I hope so too: but I wish inflexibly to adhere to the side of truth and righteousness, so far as I understand them, in every punctilio, in order to please God.

"A decided judgment on some points, you consider as unimportant, and think there is room for mutual candour." If those points are unrevealed, I say so too: but I do not consider either the deity or the atonement of Christ

as coming under this description, and I hope you think the same. Without the former, we cannot with any consistency 'call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,' which is the characteristic of a primitive believer; and without the latter, I need not say to you sir, that the gospel is rendered of none effect. As to "candour," it is due to all men, even infidels and atheists; but candour will not lead me to treat them as objects of divine favour, but to speak the truth to them in love.

Possibly you may think it unfair to reason as I have done, from practices to principles, and that we ought to make a wide difference between the one and the other. But the difference, as it appears to me, is only as the difference between root and branch. Faith is not a mere speculation of the understanding, nor unbelief a mere mistake in judgment. They are both of a moral nature, or salvation would not be connected with the former, and final condemnation with the latter.

I ought perhaps to apologise for having written so much, in the manner I have done; but I think you will not take it amiss. The collision of thoughts from persons who have been in different habits and connections, are sometimes of mutual advantage. If you should disapprove of my remarks, try and set me right, and you will be entitled to my grateful acknowledgments.

DEITY OF CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO OUR CALLING ON HIS NAME AND TRUSTING IN HIM FOR SALVATION.

THERE are some doctrines of greater importance than others, and which may properly be termed fundamental truths. Whatever difficulty may attend the specification of those doctrines, it will not be found more difficult than a distinct enumeration of those christian graces, which are essential to true religion. The precise degree of holiness necessary to salvation, is not more easily to be defined, than the degree of truth to be believed; yet no one can doubt, that a certain degree of truth and holiness is essential to christianity.

The importance of a principle must be determined by the relation it bears to other principles and duties of religion. Truth is a system, though it is not taught in the scriptures in a systematic form. The gospel is not a mass of discordant sentiments, but possesses a lovely proportion, a beautiful analogy.* The oracles of God contain their 'first principles,' † which suppose a scheme or system of principles. To show the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection, the apostle proceeds to prove that it involves in it the resurrection of Christ, and that this involves in it the truth of christianity.‡ There is no part of the works of God but what bears a relation to the great system. The infinitely wise God does nothing in a loose, unconnected, or inharmonious form: connection and consistency run through all his works. And it would be strange if Redemption, the greatest of all his works, were accomplished without a plan, or without a system. But if the work itself form a complete system, just conceptions of it will be the same: otherwise our conceptions must be at variance with truth.

* Rom. xii. 6. † Heb. v. 12. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 13—15.

It is from this consideration, that a denial of one divine truth generally leads on to the denial of many others. It is by the gospel, as it is by the moral law: 'to offend in one point is to be guilty of all.' You cannot break any command, without violating the authority of the law-giver; and this being once violated, there are no bounds where to stop. 'He that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. And if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law.' The same principle which leads thee to despise the divine authority in one instance, would lead thee to do the same in all, as occasion might offer. It is much the same in reference to evangelical truth: we cannot reject one part of it, especially if that part be amongst its fundamental principles, without either rejecting, or becoming less attached to the rest.

At present there are two things which offer themselves to our consideration, in reference to the Deity of Christ; each of which, while they tend to confirm the truth of the doctrine, exhibits its importance. The one is, Calling on the name of the Lord Jesus: the other is, Trusting in him for salvation. These are of importance, or there is nothing in christianity which is so: but a denial of the Deity of Christ would render them both improper, if not impracticable.

Calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, is considered in the new testament as of equal importance with believing in him, having the same promise of salvation annexed to it.—'Whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.' And seeing it is asked, 'How shall they *call* on him, in whom they have not believed;'* it is strongly intimated, that all who truly believe in Christ, do call upon him. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the primitive christians. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians was addressed to them, in connection with 'all who in every place *call* upon the name of Jesus Christ

* Rom. x. 13, 14.

our Lord.'* Now as a rejection of the divinity of Christ renders it idolatry to worship him, or call upon his name; so it must involve a rejection of that by which primitive christians were distinguished, and which has the promise of salvation. And where these things are rejected, there is no longer any possibility of christian union: for how can those, who consider Christ to be a mere man, join in the worship of such as are employed in calling upon his name, and ascribing 'blessing and honour, and glory and power, unto the Lamb for ever!'† If there were no objection on the part of Trinitarians, there ought to be on the part of Arians and Socinians, to render their conduct consistent.‡ If we be guilty of idolatry, they ought to come out from amongst us, and be separate, as the scriptures command christians to do, with respect to idolaters.§ But if they be so indifferent about the importance of religious principle, as not to scruple such matters, there is no reason that we should be the same; and we have no warrant to acknowledge those as fellow christians, who come not under the description given of such in the new testament; that is, who call *not* upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Trusting in Christ for salvation is represented in the gospel as equivalent, and of equal importance, with believing in him.—'In his name shall the gentiles trust—I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.'‖ But trusting in Christ must be intimately connected with a belief in his proper deity. Without this, all committing of ourselves to him, and trusting in his ability to keep that which we have committed to

* 1 Cor. i. 2. † Rev. v. 13.

‡ A certain Socinian is known to have declined taking any part in the family worship of a Trinitarian, and gave this reason for it: That he could not unite with those who *call upon the name of Christ.*

§ 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. ‖ Matt. xii. 21. 2 Tim. i. 12.

him, would be placing confidence in an arm of flesh; and would bring down the curse upon us, instead of the blessing. God has expressly appropriated trust to himself alone, and prohibited our placing it in a mere creature. 'Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord—Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.'*

Every creature is entirely dependent on the Creator, and is totally incompetent to answer the character of a Saviour, especially with respect to that salvation which mankind need. That there may exist a proper foundation for trust, the character of a Saviour must unite omnipresent and omnipotent power, to controul every intelligent creature, and every particle of matter in the universe, and render every thing subservient to the great purposes of salvation. Omniscient understanding, to know perfectly, and at all times, their hearts, their dangers, and their wants. Infinite wisdom, to select unerringly, from an infinite number of supposable schemes, for the accomplishment of the great object, that which is best, both with respect to the end, and the infinitude of antecedent means. Absolute immutability, to prosecute invariably the same designs; and infinite love, to rise above millions of provocations, and embrace perpetually the same good.

That scheme therefore which denies Christ to be possessed of these divine prerogatives, and considers him as a mere dependent creature, leaves no ground for its abettors to trust unreservedly and ultimately in him for salvation; for according to their principles, Christ cannot be an edequate object of trust.

Those who deny the divinity of Christ may plead, that they confide in the *truth* of his declarations; but they might also confide in the declarations of Peter or Paul, seeing that their testimony is equally true. But to com-

* Jer. xvii. 5, 7.

mit our souls into their hands, would be unwarrantable and presumptuous; and it would be equally so to commit them into the hands of Christ, if he were a mere creature like them. To deny his proper divinity therefore, is to destroy the foundation of a sinner's hope, and to make void the distinctive evidence of primitive christianity:—Calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and committing our souls into his hands for salvation.

DEFENCE OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST,

In Reply to the Rev. Henry Davis.

SOON after the appearance of Mr. Fuller's celebrated work, on the Calvinistic and Socinian systems, the Rev. Henry Davis, pastor of the Independent congregation at Wigston in Leicestershire, published a small piece entitled "A Caution against Socinianism, in reply to Dr. Priestley." In this performance the author professed to comprise the principal arguments in favour of the pre-existence and atonement of Christ. He at the same time stated his belief to be, "that God is so united to the derived nature of Christ, and does so dwell in it, that by virtue of this union, Christ may properly be called GOD; and that *such regards* become due to him as are not due to any created nature, or mere creature, be it in itself ever so excellent." Mr. Davis added, that "this appeared to him to be the doctrine taught by our Lord and his apostles, and that he was the more confirmed in this opinion, because some Socinians have acknowledged that it was the sentiment of most or all the christian fathers, before the council of Nice."

Mr. Fuller made no direct reply to this performance;

but as he saw in it a tendency to betray the cause which it pretended to defend, he wrote the preseding article as a caveat against it, and also another on the doctrine of the Trinity; both of which were inserted in a periodical work then in the hands of the present Editor. The piece on the Trinity, having since been dismembered from the series, and reprinted in the uniform edition of the Author's works, is here omitted. The two following papers were written in reply to Mr. Davis, who in the same publication invited the attention of his unknown opponent to the subject. ED.

YOUR correspondent H. D. seems dissatisfied with the trinitarian doctrine of Christ's proper deity, and wishes to substitute the indwelling scheme in its place.—In writing the piece which occasioned his remarks, I did not once think of "Athanasius," nor of any human writer; but simply of stating what appeared to be the mind of God in his word. Neither was it my object to prove, concerning any denomination of professing christians, that they are not in a state of salvation; but merely that those *principles* which disown Christ's proper deity, be they held by whom they may, *if fully embraced so as to be acted upon*, do not consist with it.

Your correspondent asks, "How am I to conceive of this;" that is, of Christ's proper deity. "Am I to consider the deity of Christ as separate and distinct from the deity of the Father, and the Holy Spirit? Is there one deity of the Son, another of the Father, and another of the Spirit?" If he intend to ask, whether the proposition, *Christ is true God*, mean any thing different from the proposition, *the Father is true God?* I answer, it certainly does. But if, whether the deity of Father, Son, and Spirit, be one or more deities? He must know that the former, and not the latter, is the avowed principle of trinitarians. I have always supposed, that godhead is

common to Father, Son, and Spirit; and that whatever distinction there is between them, it consists not in their nature, but in their personality. Surely H. D. while he objects to the doctrine of the Athanasian creed, must have paid but little attention to it. "There is one person of the Father," says the writer of that creed, "another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost: *but the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one.*" As therefore he has mistaken the premises, the consequence of "a division in deity" falls of course.

But "something like this," he thinks "is the case when the three persons are separately addressed in prayer." Did not the primitive christians *call on the name of Christ?* Did not Stephen call upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit? And was not this praying to him as distinct, though not as "separate," from the Father? Yet I suppose Stephen will not be accused of making "a division in deity."

"It is evident, that amongst common christians there are many who, for want of time and inclination to read and examine for themselves, have no other idea of the doctrine of the Trinity than that of three Gods." To *whom* is this evident? To me it appears that those christians who read the least of human speculations upon this subject, and content themselves with the doctrine abundantly taught in the scriptures, that *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God: yet that there are not three Gods, but one God,* are the least likely to err.

But, "Is not Tritheism an error that ought to be guarded against, as well as that of Socinianism?" The scriptures plentifully guard us against polytheism; and if the danger of tritheism was what is here supposed, it is rather surprising that they never guard us against that. Yet so it is. The sacred writers expressly call the Father, God; the Son, God; and the Holy Spirit, God;* yet they seem

* John i. 1. Acts v. 3, 4.

never to have thought of christians so understanding it as to make three Gods, and therefore never guard against it. Neither is there a single caution in all the word of God against making too much of Christ, though there are many against making too little of him. The union between him and the Father appears to me to be so described in scripture, as to leave no room for dishonouring the latter, while we truly honour the former.* On the other hand, a jealousy for the honour of the Father, at the expense of that of the Son, was the error and overthrow of the jewish nation.

The trinitarian doctrine of the eternal Son of God, the second person in the godhead, assuming human nature in the fulness of time, appears to me to be 'the great mystery of godliness;' and that which ought to be received 'without controversy,' or curious speculations, how these things are. It will not be expected that I should here enumerate the many passages by which this is supported in the new testament: I will however mention one, which has lately struck me as possessing peculiar force. It is 1 John i. 2. 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life. For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.'

On this passage I would remark—(1) That there is a manifest resemblance between John's introduction to his epistle, and that to his gospel: and that the same personage that is there called 'The Word,' is here called 'The Life,' and 'The Word of Life.'—(2) That as The Word who was 'with God,' and who 'was God,' was 'made flesh,' and the apostles 'beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;' so the 'Life, even that eternal Life that was with

* See Calvinistic and Socinian systems compared, Letter vii.

the Father, was manifested, and they saw it.' And the manifestation of the Life, in human nature, is given as the reason why he came to be 'seen with the eyes, and looked upon, and handled;' plainly intimating, that if he had not thus been manifested he would have been concealed from all mortal eyes.—(3) It was not the deity itself, "personally distinguished as the FATHER," (for which Dr. Watts in his latter days contended *) that was manifested; but *that eternal Life which was* WITH *the Father.*

As to the *Indwelling scheme,* I do not at present sufficiently comprehend it. If H. D. will give a brief and clear statement of it, and of the evidence on which it rests, whether in his own words, or those of the ablest authors who have written upon it, I will endavour seriously and candidly to consider what he may advance.

REMARKS ON THE INDWELLING SCHEME,

In Reply to the Rev. Henry Davis.

I PROPOSED in my last, that you should state the Indwelling scheme, with the scriptural grounds on which you supposed it to rest. I wish you had complied with this proposal: merely writing *about* a subject brings nothing to an issue. I will endeavour however to collect your sentiments as well as I can.

I agree with you, that "attempts to investigate difficult parts of divine truth, should be conducted with humility and candour." If any thing I have written, or may write, be inconsistent with either of these virtues, I am willing

* Palmer's Life of Watts, p. 62.

to bear the blame. But I hope an attempt to prove, that the denial of Christ's proper deity is inconsistent with worshipping him, and trusting in him for salvation, is not necessarily subject to such a charge. I am far from thinking that every person is aware of the legitimate consequences of his own doctrine, or that in his approaches to God he acts up to them; and still farther from "excluding from salvation all who may not have the same ideas of the subject with myself." I must add however, that true candour does not consist in entertaining a good opinion of one another, *whatever be our religious principles;* but in speaking the truth in love. You may think well of me, and I of you; and we may go on complimenting each other, till we both fall into perdition. As to your personal religion, and that of the "very many" who, you say, think with you, I have never called it in question. It is of *things,* not *persons,* that I have written. If any of us find ourselves affected by what another advances, it becomes us to examine whether what he alleges be true, and not to content ourselves with exclaiming against his want of candour. If I think the worse of any man on account of his *differing from me,* that will only betray my vanity and folly; but if I do not think the worse of a man for what I account his *differing from the scriptures,* and thereby dishonouring Christ, that is esteeming men irrespective of the truth that dwelleth in them, and rendering it of no importance; which, however pleasing to flesh and blood, may be no less repugnant to the spirit of christianity, than the most uncharitable bitterness.

You ask, "Whether by the proper deity of Christ, I mean any thing more than his being called God in the scriptures." Certainly I do; or I have all along been deceiving myself, and the reader. I mean that *he is* what he is called. But, do I suppose "that he is God in the same sense as the three persons united are one God?" No: I do not. The Father is not God in this sense, any more than the Son and Spirit. We nowhere read that the Father is *a* God, the Son *a* God, or the Spirit *a* God;

when spoken of in distinction from each other; nor do I recollect any such idea conveyed in the scriptures; yet each divine person has every perfection of Godhead ascribed to him.

You have twice suggested, that the Son and Spirit, having assumed visible appearances, must have a nature different from Deity. You cannot mean that the nature or appearance *assumed* was different from deity; for of this there is no dispute; but the nature *assuming*. But what proof is there of this? I do not know that the Holy Spirit ever assumed any other nature than his own, though he descended on Christ in the form or appearance of a dove: and though the Son assumed human nature, yet this implies no inferiority to the Father, in respect of what he was antecedent to such assumption.

I have no objection to our enquiring, not only into the evidence that the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in scripture, but, as far as scripture informs us, what that doctrine is. It does not become us however to take up the principle of the divine Unity, however true and important, and having formed an idea of it as being personal, resolve to admit of no other than what shall agree with our preconceived notion; for this were to regulate certainty by uncertainty, the certain light of revelation by the uncertain conjectures supposed to be derived from the light of nature. We ought to regulate our ideas of the divine Unity by what is taught us in the scriptures, of the Trinity; and not those of the Trinity by what we know, or think we know from the light of nature, of the Unity.

It appears to me, by the tenour of your pieces, especially from some passages, that you and your brethren have in this matter symbolized with the Socinians; who, having taken up the idea of God as being *one person*, reject every thing in the scriptures that is inconsistent with it; and therefore renounce first the deity, and then the atonement of Christ; and in short almost every thing pertaining to revelation, except what might have been

learned without it. I do not say that you go their lengths; but would seriously and affectionately entreat you to consider, whether you have not adopted their principle. Do you not make your ideas of the unity of God the standard by which to try the scripture doctrine of the trinity; forming, as you say, "the best ideas you can" of the latter subject, and holding nothing fast except the former. If the admission of Christ's proper deity, though taught as plainly, and much more frequently in the new testament than the other, cannot be understood so as, in your ideas, to be "fully consistent," it must be given up; and a "godlike form" of a man, as one of your writers expresses it, substituted in its place. But if, as you acknowledge, "the three divine persons spoken of in scripture be in some sense one God," why should you not suspect, or rather renounce, your own ideas of the unity, as if it must needs be confined to *one person?* And instead of "forming the best ideas you can" *how* this is, why should you not be content with believing that it *is* so, without pretending to pry into that above your comprehension. Nor ought it to be objected, that so abstruse a subject cannot be of any great importance. Can you communicate to me, or form to yourself any idea of self-existence, eternity, or infinity? Yet, if you do not believe them, you do not believe in God. Your own scheme also appears to be equally incomprehensible as ours; for you do not pretend to "explain *how* the Son and Spirit derive their nature from the Father." Here then you can admit of mystery, though, as to the question, "*How* the three divine persons spoken of in scripture are one God," you are for going about to "form the best idea that you can;" and if none present themselves, conclude that proper deity belongs only to one of them—a singular method this of answering the question!

If you think that you believe "the three divine persons spoken of in scripture to be *divine*, and to be *one* God," do you not deceive yourself? You speak of "the Son and Spirit having a *derived* nature." If by derivation

you mean what is *essential* and *eternal*, as expressed by the term begotten, there is no dispute on this head. But if you mean that they were produced by the will and power of the Father, they are mere creatures; and however exalted, cannot be "divine." No Socinian, I apprehend, would deny that God dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, enabling him to perform all his mighty works. But he would tell you, and justly too, that this does not prove him to be any thing more than human. Dr. Watts, I am aware, spoke of the indwelling of the Father in such a way as that the Father and the human nature became "*one person*;" and thus conceived that he maintained the proper deity of Christ. But whether he did or not, his conceit of the Father's assuming human nature, which the new testament invariably ascribes to the *Son*, or *Word*, or that eternal *Life* that was *with* the Father, leads on to the neglect, and by degrees to the disbelief, of this important truth. I scarcely remember ever to have heard a minister of your persuasion introduce the subject in the pulpit; and much less insist upon it with that earnestness and delight which is so frequently found in the writings of the new testament.

Have you not symbolized with the Socinians, till you have nearly, if not entirely, lost this great doctrine? Do you really consider Christ as any thing more than *a Man extraordinarily inspired of God?* If you do, how is it that you should feel yourself hurt when the contrary is maintained? I advanced nothing in the piece which first attracted your notice, but the divinity of Jesus Christ. I had not the remotest idea of opposing the Indwelling scheme. I thought nothing about it; but merely stated a doctrine which your writers, Watts and Doddridge, professed to maintain. Yet this excites your suspicions. Can it be a matter of doubt whereabouts you are? Excuse me if I enquire farther, Will your scheme allow you to *worship* Christ, I do not say "separately" but distinctly from the Father, as the martyr Stephen worshipped him, and prayed to him in his dying moments; and as all the

primitive christians worshipped him, *calling upon his name?* Finally: Can you in the full persuasion of this scheme *trust* in him for salvation, as one who is *able* to keep that which is committed to him? Does it not rather teach you to trust *in the Father only,* as dwelling in him?

These are serious things, and require to be answered in some other way than by exclaiming against the want of candour. Candour, sir, requires us to deal plainly and faithfully with each other. By the manner in which you, and writers on your side of the question, express yourselves, it would seem to be a matter of small account what we believe on these momentous subjects, provided we do but think well of one another. But surely that which affects the Object of worship, and the Foundation of hope, cannot be of trifling importance. Principles form the character in the sight of God: a handful of cockle may seem of but little consequence at seedtime, but it will appear different at harvest.

Your scheme requires you to symbolize with Socinians in denying our Lord Jesus Christ to be *equal with* the Father, and to explain away those scriptures which speak of him as such. Thus that glorious passage in Phil. ii. 5—7, is degraded and martyred: *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* This is made to mean, that "his human soul, being in union with the Godhead," that is with the Father, "was invested with a godlike form and glory in all ages. Thus he oftentimes appeared to the patriarchs as the Angel of the Lord, and as God. This seems to be 'the form of God' which the apostle speaks of; nor did he think it 'any robbery,' or presumption so to do; that is, to appear and act as God. Yet he 'emptied himself,' or divested himself of this godlike form or appearance, this divine Shekinah; and coming in the flesh, he consented to be 'made in the likeness of other men;' nay, he took upon him 'the form of a servant,' instead of 'the form of God.'"*

* Palmer's Life of Watts, p. 86.

'The form of God' means the godlike form assumed by a man! A man, or human soul, thought it no presumption to 'appear and act as God!' A man consented to be made in the likeness of men. No, this was too gross; therefore the term 'other' is added to help out. A man was so humble and condescending, as to take upon him the form of a servant! And the existence of this man was necessary to the covenant of redemption;* that is, till God had formed a creature out of nothing, he had no counsel, plan, or design, what should be done! And is this Dr. WATTS, the sweet singer of our Israel; the man who in his better days taught us thus to worship—

> "Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad,
> From everlasting was the Word;
> *With* God he was, the Word *was* God,
> And must divinely be adored."

How are the mighty fallen!

By the several passages of scripture which you have introduced in support of the Indwelling scheme, it seems to me that you interpret that as being essential which is only economical, just as in other instances you make that to be economical which is essential. Referring to John xiv. 10, you say, "Our Lord appeals to his works to prove that he was in the Father, and the Father in him—the Father in me doeth the works." All that Christ said or did in the Father's name was indeed a proof of such a mutual indwelling, as that he who had seen the one had seen the other; but not of our Lord's deity consisting in the Father's dwelling in him. It might as well be alleged from this passage, that the deity of the Father consisted in that of the Son, who is said to be 'in him.' This and all other such passages, which ascribe the works of Christ to the power of the Father, are expressive of the *economy* of things, and not of the insufficiency of the Saviour.

I submit to your consideration the following brief statement of my views on this subject. The first measure in the execution of the great work of redemption was, that

* Palmer's Life of Watts, p. 68.

he who was 'in the form of God,' and as such, 'equal with God,' *took upon him the form of a servant*; and having taken that form, it was fitting in the account of Him who hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, that he should act under it. Now it belongs to the character of a servant, that *he receive his instructions* from him whose servant he is: and thus did Christ. Though, considered as divine, 'he knew all things,' John xxi. 17; yet as a servant, and as being made in the likeness of men, he grew in knowledge, taught nothing, and knew nothing as it were, but what he had heard and learned of the Father. I speak to the world, says he, those things which 'I have heard of him'—Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which 'I have heard of God:' this did not Abraham—I have given unto them the words which 'thou gavest me.' John viii. 26, 40. xvii. 8.

Farther: It belongs to the character of a servant, that *he act under the authority, and be directed by the will* of him whose servant he is: and thus did Christ. Though as a Son, his throne was acknowledged by the Father himself to be for ever and ever, Heb. i. 8; yet as a servant he learned obedience. He was sent by the Father, and did every thing in obedience to his will. 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do—I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent me—I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' John v. 19, 30. vi. 38.

Finally: It belongs to the character of a servant, that *he be supported in his work* by him who employs him: and thus was Christ. As a divine person he was acknowledged to be most Mighty—the mighty God: Psal. xlv. 3. Isai. ix. 6: yet as a servant, and during his humiliation, he is commonly represented as doing what he did by the power of the Father. He ordinarily ascribes his miracles to this, and not to his own power. It was 'the Father who was in him that did the works.' Thus he was 'God's servant whom he upheld, his elect in whom his soul delighteth.'

Is it not a pity, sir, that this surprising instance of condescension for the very purpose of redeeming us from the wrath to come, should be converted into an argument against his essential dignity! If it be asked, What is it then which is ascribed to the divinity of Christ, if his miracles and works are ordinarily ascribed to the Father, or to the Holy Spirit; and of what use was it? I answer: It gave *value* and *virtue* to all he did and suffered. Thus he is represented as 'by himself' purging our sins —The blood of Jesus Christ, 'his Son,' cleanseth us from all sin—We have a great high priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus 'the Son of God.' Heb. i. 3. iv. 14. 1 John i. 7.

You mention some other passages: as, 'God was manifest in the flesh;' by which, I suppose, you would understand the Father, or the Deity, without distinction of persons. But who was it that was 'seen of angels, believed on in the world, and received up into glory?' Was this the Father?—Frequent mention has also been made of Col. ii. 9. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' as though it was not the second person in the Godhead only that assumed human nature, but the Godhead itself. To this I answer: If the passage refer to the constitution of the person of Christ, which to me is doubtful, it may without any force be understood of every perfection of the divine nature dwelling in him, in common with the Father. To interpret it of the Godhead, without distinction of persons, is to contradict the whole tenor of the new testament. 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman—The Word that was with God, and who was God, even that Eternal Life that was with the Father, was made flesh, or manifested to us.' Gal. iv. 4. John i. 1, 14. 1 John i. 2.

God being *in Christ*, reconciling the world unto himself, has no relation, I apprehend, to the constitution of Christ's person, but to the exercise of mercy through his atonement. Thus it is that God in Christ, or for Christ's sake, is said to have forgiven us. Ephes. iv. 32.

POWER AND INFLUENCE OF TRUTH.

Query. WHAT is the true meaning of those parts of the new testament, which declare the gospel to have a powerful operation in the souls of men, especially in believers? See Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 18, 24. 1 Thes. ii. 18. And is the power of the gospel in any sense to be distinguished from the power and influence of the Holy Spirit; or are they always connected; or do both include one and the same divine operation?

Answer. That the gospel of Christ has an influence on the souls of men, cannot be denied: as a means it is naturally adapted to this end. Even where it is not cordially believed, it is often known to operate powerfully upon the mind and conscience. It is natural to suppose that it should do so: the human mind is so formed, as that words, whether spoken or written, should influence it. We cannot read or hear a discourse of any kind, if it be interesting, without being more or less affected by it; and it would be very surprising if the gospel, which implies our being utterly undone, and relates to our everlasting wellbeing, should be the only subject in nature which should have no effect upon us. The gospel also being indited by the Holy Spirit, the influence which it has upon the minds of men is ascribed to him. It was in this way, that is, by the preaching of Noah, that the Spirit of Jehovah 'strove' with the antediluvians. It was in this way that he was 'resisted' by the Israelites; that is, they resisted the *messages* which the Holy Spirit sent to them by Moses and the prophets. Hence the expressive language in the confession recorded in Nehemiah ix. 30. 'Many years didst thou testify against them *by thy Spirit* in thy prophets.' Also the pointed address of Stephen,

to those who rejected the gospel of Christ, in Acts vii. 51. 'Ye do always resist *the Holy Ghost:* as your fathers did, so do ye.' This, for ought I can conceive, may with propriety be called the *common* operation of the grace of God.

As the gospel has an effect upon the minds and consciences even of many who do not cordially believe it, much more does it influence those who do. In them it works *effectually*, transforming them into its own likeness. 1 Thess. ii. 13. Their hearts are cast into it as into a mould, and all its sacred principles become to them principles of action. The grace, the wisdom, the purity, the justice, and the glory of it, powerfully subdues, melts, and attracts their hearts to love and obedience. The *power* of God had often been exerted by various means, and to various ends. Thunder and smoke, blackness and darkness and tempest, as displayed on mount Sinai, were the power of God unto conviction. Overwhelming floods, and devouring flames, in the case of the old world, of Sodom and Gomorrha, were the power of God unto destruction. Nor were these means better adapted to their ends, than is the gospel to be the power of God unto salvation. It has ever pleased God by this means, weak and despised as it is in the account of men, 'to save them that believe. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

The above is offered as an answer to the former part of the question. But it is enquired, "Is the power of the gospel upon believers, in any sense to be distinguished from the power and influence of the Holy Spirit?"

That the power of the gospel in the hearts of believers, is the power of the Holy Spirit, is admitted. All that the gospel effects is to be attributed to the Holy Spirit, who works by it as a means. It is called 'the sword of the Spirit,' Ephes. vi. 17; its influence therefore is as much the influence of the Spirit, as that of a sword is of the hand that wields it. That obedience to the truth by

which our souls are purified, is 'through the Spirit.' 1 Pet. i. 22. Indeed all the means, whether ordinances or providences, or whatever is rendered subservient to the sanctification and salvation of the souls of men, are under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The influence therefore which they have to these ends, is reckoned *his* influence. But it does not follow from hence, that "the power of the gospel is in no sense to be distinguished from the power of the Holy Spirit; or that the one is always connected with the other; or that they both necessarily, and in all cases, include one and the same divine operation." The contrary of each of these positions appears to be the truth. The passages already adduced, speak of the influence of the word upon those, and those only, who believe: and then the question is, How is it that a sinner is brought to believe?

The word of God cannot, in the nature of things, operate effectually *till it is believed*; and how is this brought about? Here is the difficulty. Belief, it may be said, in other cases is induced by evidence. This is true; and if the hearts of men were not utterly averse from the gospel, its own evidence, without any supernatural interposition, would be sufficient to render every one who heard it a believer. But they are averse; and we all know that evidence, be it ever so clear, will make but little impression upon a mind infected with prejudice. The scriptures speak of 'sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth,' as distinct things; and as if the one was antecedent to the other. 2 Thess. ii. 13. They also tell us that 'the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, and she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul.' We are said to 'believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.' Ephes. i. 19, 20. It would not require more power to believe the gospel than any other system of truth, if the heart were but in harmony with it: but as it is not, it becomes necessary that a new bias of heart should be given as a preparative to knowing or embracing it. The

scriptures not only speak of knowledge as the means of promoting a holy temper of heart, but of a holy temper as the foundation of true knowledge. 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord.' Jer. xxiv. 7.

If it be objected, that 'faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:' I answer, that faith must have an object, or it cannot exist. The word of God is the objective cause of faith; but it does not follow from hence, that it is its sole or compulsive cause. Eating cometh by food, and food by the blessing of God upon the earth. Food may be said to be the objective cause of a man's eating, seeing he could not have eaten without food; but it does not therefore follow, that food was the impulsive or sole cause of his eating; for had he not been blessed with an appetite, he would not have eaten, though surrounded by food in the greatest plenty.

If it be farther objected, that we can form no rational idea of the influence of the Holy Spirit, any otherwise than as through the medium of the word: I answer, we can form no idea of the influence of the Holy Spirit at all, either with or without the word, but merely of its effects. We may indeed form an idea of the influence of truth upon our minds, but we cannot conceive how a divine influence accompanies it. Nor is it necessary that we should, any more than that we should comprehend 'the way of the Spirit,' in the quickening and formation of our animal nature, in order to be satisfied that we are the creatures of God. It is sufficient for us, that we are conscious of certain effects, and are taught in the scriptures to ascribe them to a divine cause.

REGENERATION BY THE WORD OF GOD.

THE incorruptible 'seed,' by which we are born again, according to 1 Pet. i. 23, alludes not to the first principle in vegetables, but in animals; and what this is in generation, the word of God is allowed to be in regeneration. This I apprehend is giving all the scope to the passage, which can reasonably be desired.

That there is a divine influence in this change, which is immediate, or without any instrument whatever, is supposed in the preseding paper; but I do not consider this as expressive of *the whole change* denoted by the term *regeneration.* I admit regeneration to be by the word of God, and that this truth is taught us by the passage in question, and also in James i. 18; nor does this concession appear to clash with the above position. When God created man, he breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And in procreation, unless we maintain that souls are generated by human instrumentality, there is an immediate divine agency, very similar to that in creation, and which is expressed by 'forming the spirit of man within him.' Now as this is consistent with man's being brought into existence by the instrumentality of man; why should not an immediate influence from Him who 'quickeneth all things,' be consistent with the instrumentality of the word in regeneration?

Regeneration has frequently been distinguished from conversion; and I have no doubt but the terms are of different signification, as are also the terms creation and resurrection, by which the same divine change is indicated. I am inclined to think that these terms are not designed to express the different stages of God's work upon the soul, but the same divine work under different ideas or

representations. It has been said, that regeneration expresses that part of the change wherein we are *passive*, and conversion that wherein we are *active;* but the idea of passivity, as well as activity, is included in conversion. God turns us, ere we turn to him. Sinners are said to be converted, as well as to convert. On the other hand, the idea of activity as well as passivity, is included in regeneration. Whatever may be said of the generation of an animal, we can form no conception of the change in the temper of a rational soul, or as the scriptures express it, of 'renewing the spirit of our minds,' without the mind being in exercise. It is passive with respect to the agency of the Holy Spirit in producing the change, so as to contribute nothing towards it; but the very nature of the change itself, being from a state of enmity to love, implies activity of mind. It does not therefore seem perfectly accurate to say, we are first endued with spiritual life, and then we become active; no otherwise however, than as by the order of nature, seeing that activity is of the very essence of spiritual life.

Now considering regeneration as expressive of that entire change, by which we enter as it were into a new moral world, and possess a new kind of being (and in this sense I think it is always to be understood in the new testament) it is as proper to say, we are regenerated by the word of God, as it is to say, that 'Abraham begat Isaac;' though in Isaac's coming into the world he was the subject of a divine agency, in which Abraham had no concern.

INWARD WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT,

Or, God speaking peace to his people.

'I WILL hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints— Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' Psal. lxxxv. 8. xxxv. 3.

The meaning of these passages requires to be ascertained from the context. The former appears to have been written after the captivity, and on account of the jews having fallen into sad declensions, which had brought on fresh troubles. In the foregoing part of the psalm, the writer acknowledges God's great goodness in their restoration; and grounds a plea from thence, that he would again turn them from their sins, and cause his anger to cease. And having offered up this petition, 'Show us thy mercy, oh Lord, and grant us thy salvation;' he sets himself as it were upon his watch tower, to receive an answer, which his confidence in the divine goodness presumed would be an answer of peace. The word 'shalom,' in the old testament, commonly signifies prosperity. This was the object for which he had been praying: and when he says, 'God will speak peace unto his people,' he means, I take it, that he will bestow prosperity upon them. For GOD to speak peace, is the same thing as to bestow it; he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast.

The meaning of the other passage is much the same. It is a prayer of David, that God would save him from his enemies; as if he should say, Speak but the word, 'I am thy salvation,' and all my enemies will be disappointed.

Concerning believers of the present day, the question amounts to this: *In what form or manner does God communicate peace to our minds, and the knowledge of our interest in his salvation?*

There is no doubt but that true christians do possess, though not without interruption, peace of mind, joy in the Holy Ghost, and a solid well-grounded persuasion of their interest in eternal life: and some have represented these enjoyments as conveyed to the heart by immediate revelation from heaven, or by the suggestion of some passage of scripture to the mind, the import of which seems to include the happy intelligence. Suppose for example, a person to be under great dejection and fear respecting his interest in Christ, and while he is poring over his case, the passage above alluded to is suggested to his mind, 'I am thy salvation;' some would suppose this was no other than the voice of God speaking peace to his soul, and that for him to question the goodness of his state after this would be unbelief.

If this be God's way of manifesting himself to his people, then revelation is not perfect; but God is making new revelations, and revelations of new truths continually; for as to the interest that any individual has in spiritual blessings, be it ever so much a truth, it is nowhere directly revealed in the scriptures: nor is there any possible way of proving it from thence, except by *inference*. There is not a passage in the bible that says, concerning any one of us, 'I am thy salvation.' The scripture speaks only of *characters*; and if we answer to these characters, we can prove that the things promised belong to us, but not otherwise. I own that I consider all such suggestions, wherein it is not the truth contained in the passage itself, but a presumption of its being immediately sent from God to the party, that affords the comfort, as real enthusiasm, and as destitute of all foundation in the word of God. I do not deny that many godly people have been carried away by such things; but I have seen evils, more than a few, which have arisen from them.

Those persons who ground their evidences for heaven on impressions of scripture on their minds, are generally favoured, as they suppose, with many other revelations, besides those which relate to their interest in eternal life. They are often *directed*, as to present duty, and *foretold* of future events. If in a state of hesitation, as to the path of duty, they pray to the Lord; so far they do well. But in addition to this, instead of enquiring into the mind of God, as revealed in his word, they expect some immediate suggestion from him. And if, while they are thinking of the conduct in question, such a passage as that occur to their minds, 'This is the way, walk ye in it;' they immediately conclude, that this is a direction from God to follow that particular course which at the time occupied the mind; and which generally, if not always, proves to be the course to which their hearts were previously inclined. By such means many have been deluded into great errors, to the dishonour of God, and the ruin of their future peace.

By the same means, others have been led to suppose themselves in the secret of God, concerning *future events*. They have been praying, it may be, for the conversion of a favourite child, and some such passage as this has been suggested to their minds: 'I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' From hence they have concluded, that the child would sometime be converted and saved. And this their confidence has been communicated, till the child himself has heard of it; and being willing to catch at any thing that might buoy up his vain hope, he has presumed upon a future conversion while living in a course of sin. At length however the parent has witnessed the death of the child, and that without any signs of a change. The consequence has been despondency, and calling in question his own personal religion. If says he this promise did not come from God, I have no reason to think any other did; and so all may be delusion.

This is not the worst. Godly persons are not the only characters who have passages of scripture impressed upon their minds, and that 'with power,' as it is often termed.

The most abandoned sinners, if they have been used to read and hear the word of God, can talk of such things as these. I have seldom known persons of this description but who have some such false hope, by which they quiet their minds amidst a career of iniquity. Twenty or thirty years ago, they will tell you, they were under strong convictions, and they had a promise; and have ever since had some hope that they should at last be saved; though they must confess that their life has been very far from what it should have been.

But the question will again be asked, *In what way does God speak peace to his people; or say unto a soul, I am thy salvation?*

If I were to answer, By bestowing gospel peace upon them, or enabling them to discern and approve the gospel way of salvation; it would be a just application of the passages where these expressions are found, and would accord with other scriptures. The Lord directs poor sinners, saying, 'Ask for the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Jer. vi. 16. Our Lord takes up this language, and applies the good old way to himself, saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls.' Matt. xi. 28, 29. Thus it is by an approving view of God's way of salvation, such a view as leads us to walk in it, that we may obtain peace: and thus it is that God speaks peace to the soul, and says, I am thy salvation.

It is very indifferent by what means we are brought to embrace the gospel way of salvation, if we do but cordially embrace it. It may be by silent reflection, by reading or hearing the word, or by some suitable part of scripture occurring to the mind, by means of which the soul is led to see its lost condition, and the only door of hope opened by the gospel. There is such a harmony in divine truth, that a proper view of any one branch of it will lead on to a discovery of others; and such a connec-

tion, that we cannot cordially approve of a part, but the whole will follow. And no sooner is the gospel in possession of the heart, but joy and peace will ordinarily accompany it; for if we behold the glory of God's way of saving sinners, and approve of it, we must in a greater or less degree be conscious of it; and knowing that the whole tenour of the new testament promises eternal life to believers, we cannot but conclude ourselves interested in it. Believing on the Son of God, we are justified; and being thus justified, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 1.

APPLICATION OF ABSOLUTE PROMISES.

Upon what grounds may persons apply to themselves, or claim an interest in what are called absolute promises; such as Isai. xliii. 25. 'I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'

The sense of this passage, like most others, requires to be ascertained from the context. God is addressing Jacob, or Israel as a nation, and reminding them of their great depravity: from whence he asserts, that all the mercy exercised towards them must be free or unmerited. God often spared them as a nation, when he might utterly have destroyed them, and must have done so, had he dealt with them according to their sins; and his thus remitting the punishment of their iniquity was a kind of national pardon. Num. xiv. 19, 20. Such a pardon was bestowed of God, for his 'own name's sake;' or as he often reminds them, out of regard to the covenant which he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and was extended equally to the godly and ungodly among them. To fulfil the promise which he had made to the patriarchs,

of preserving their posterity in being as a nation, till Shiloh the Messiah should come, it was necessary that many such national remissions should be bestowed; though multitudes among them were uninterested in such a pardon as is connected with eternal life.

If the forementioned passage includes any thing more than the above; if it comprehend such a forgiveness of sins as implies the special favour of God, it could belong to none but the godly among them. The truth taught in the passage will doubtless apply to them, and to all other godly persons; namely, that the forgiveness of their sins is wholly owing to the free grace of God. It is not for any thing in us, but for his own name's sake, that he saveth and calleth us, forgiveth and accepteth us. As to naming this an "absolute promise," all promises of spiritual blessings are in this sense absolute, though made to characters of a certain description; yet it is not on account of any goodness in them, but for his own name's sake, that every blessing is conferred. Where promises are addressed to particular *characters*, as in 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' they are designed to point out the subjects interested in them, and to exhibit encouragements to return to God. Where no character is described, which is of a spiritual nature, as in the passage in question, the design is to point out the *cause* of salvation. But the scriptures ought to be taken together, and not in detached sentences. No person has a warrant to conclude himself interested in a promise, wherein God merely teaches the cause of forgiveness, unless he possess that contrition which leads him to 'confess and forsake his sins:' for this would be to have fellowship with him, while we walk in darkness. 1 John i. 6. Prov. xxviii. 13.

Still it is enquired, What use may the people of God in all ages make of those promises and declarations of scripture, which were made to particular persons on special occasions? 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength

be—The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms—I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.' Deut. xxxiii. 25, 27. Josh. i. 5. Isai. xliii. 2.

I answer, examine *the truth* contained in each of the promises, and try whether it fairly applies to your particular case, as well as theirs to whom it was originally addressed. General truths, or truths of general use, are often delivered in scripture to particular persons, and on special occasions. If the above passages were originally addressed to men considered as the people of God in the highest sense, that is, to the truly godly among the Israelites, they are equally applicable to the people of God in all ages of time, when placed in similar circumstances. Or if otherwise, if they had an immediate reference to God's providential care over Israel as a nation, still it is just to reason from the less to the greater. Dear as that nation was to God, yet 'Israelites indeed,' the spiritual children of Abraham, are still more so. That therefore, which to them would contain only blessings of an earthly nature, to the others would include blessings spiritual, heavenly, and without end. There is nothing in any of of these passages that I recollect, but what in other parts of scripture is abundantly promised to all the people of God in all ages of time. It is therefore consistent with the whole tenor of God's word, that christians, through patience and comfort of such promises of holy scripture, might have hope.

I shall add one thing, which may afford assistance to some who are desirous of knowing whether they have an interest in the divine promises. If the blessing contained in any promise of a spiritual nature be such as to meet your desires; if you be willing to receive it in the way that God bestows it; if you would prefer this blessing, could you but obtain it, above any thing and every thing of a worldly nature, it is undoubtedly your own: for every one that thirsteth is welcome to the waters of life.

THE LIFE OF FAITH,

Exemplified in Prosperity and Adversity.

I HAVE here two religious characters, who were intimately acquainted in early life. Providence favoured one of them with a tide of prosperity. The other fearing for his friend, lest his heart should be overcharged with the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, one day asked him, whether he did not find prosperity a snare to him. He paused and answered, "I am not conscious that I do: for I enjoy God in all things." Some years after, his affairs took another turn: he lost, if not the whole, yet the far greater part of what he had gained, and was greatly reduced. His old friend being one day in his company, renewed his question, whether he did not find the trials which had lately befallen him, to be too much for him. Again he paused and answered, "I am not conscious that I do: for now I enjoy all things in God." This was truly a life of faith. I never recollect to have met with any thing in merely human writings, that bears a nearer resemblance to the spirit of this anecdote, than certain passages in the life of "Miss Susanna Anthony."*

* *Memoirs of Miss Anthony of Newport, Rode Island*, were compiled by Dr. Hopkins, and reprinted in England in 1801, with a Recommendatory Preface by Mr. Fuller, which was also signed by Dr. Ryland and Mr. Sutcliffe. The last paragraph in this preface contains the following just conclusion. "No serious christian, we apprehend, can read the Life of Miss Anthony, without perceiving the sweetness and importance of heavenly things; and but few, if any, without being convinced by it of their own defects. It affords a singular specimen of the powerful influence of evangelical principles upon the heart and life; which, while it brings home to the bosom a proof of their divinity, must provoke the christian reader to emulate the same holy and happy attainments, walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing." ED.

Some of these are here reduced to blank verse; yet every sentiment, and the far greater part of the language, are her own.

Devotedness to God in Easy circumstances.

If I be not satisfied in THEE
Oh God! then let me be unsatisfied.
Pass now, let me beseech thee, the decree,
And let it be irrevocable too.
Swear by Thyself, that nothing else shall fill
My longing heart. None do I want but THEE:
And if thou satisfy me not, I would
Restless and easeless ever more remain.
But oh thou wilt, for thou hast kindly bid
Me open wide my mouth, and thou wilt fill it.

Oh Power divine! Come, come with the command,
And lo, 'tis opened: opened now so wide,
That nothing else can fill it but Thyself;
And thou wilt fill it: yea, though promise there
Were none: such is thy mighty love, and large
Beneficence, from whence the promise springs,
And which has wrought in me this sacred thirst,
It would, I know, incline thee to impart.
When shall I come; when before God appear!
Let not my importunity offend thee:
'Tis not of providence that I complain.
All I can ask, or heart can wish, I have:
Friends and relations full of tenderness
And love, kind as creation can afford:
Thy providence supplies my every want,
Mercy and goodness me surround; I'm full:
With none on earth I'd circumstances change.
Miss I their wealth? I also miss their cares.
'Tis love, I trust, that prompts my discontent;
The love of God. I love to see his face:
Oh when shall I behold it free from sin.

My God, my Father, my almighty Friend,
My Saviour, and my everlasting hope;
When shall I thee behold! Oh the delight,
The unbounded joy to see the God I love!
Thou, thou rejoicest in Thyself above;

Though infinite, with infinite delight;
Then how much more, I, a worm, be filled
By THEE, with ravishing transporting joy;

Though I could know no more of thee, than here
Is knowable; yet still I'd be content
To fight and struggle in this field of battle.
But oh to see the God I wish! The God,
A glance of whom has swallowed up my soul,
In longings to behold with open face!

How short, how low are all my thoughts of him!
Might I behold him like the blest above;
Though 'twere but for a moment, oh how sweet!
Yet this would fix me there eternally;
For who on earth can see thy face and live.
Then let me die, that I may thee behold;
Freely I'd give my life away for this,
The vision and fruition of my God.
Come then, Lord Jesus; come, oh quickly come;
Pity my thirsty soul, and break the chain!

Devotedness to God under Dark and threatening Providences.

Written at a time when, she says, her dear parents were greatly afflicted, and she herself exposed to want, contempt, and evil reports, and without any prospect of even a subsistence, but from the unseen hand of providence.

With griefs and cares beset on every side,
The Lord hath touched me in a tender part.
All ways seem hedged up: yet I sink not
Beneath my load—There's no unrighteousness
In God: his ways are faithfulness and love.

All that I have and am are his by right,
And his by solemn resignation too.
Adored be his name, who thus supports
My feeble soul—Serious, but not o'erwhelmed.
For why? I see the hand of God in all.
'Tis he who orders all things for my trial,
Dashing my hopes of earthly happiness,
And even of bare subsistence in the world.

Yet I would see the crown on Jesus' head,
And bid him reign, reign glorious and supreme;
Disposing all things which relate to me,
According to his will, and for his praise.
It is enough, if he be glorified:
For him it is my happiness to live,
Adverse or prosperous, my joy to die.

Although he slay me, yet I'll trust in him!
And let it now appear: I long to bear
Full testimony to his name, while thus
I walk in darkness, and can see no light.
Oh let me now give proof how I esteem
Him worthy of my love and highest praise.
Shall things created spoil my present peace,
While God, the uncreated source of every good,
Liveth and changeth not; and lives my friend?
In him my life is hid: here then I rest,
While pleased that he my portion here should choose.

E'rewhile I sung of mercy, now of judgment.
Oh thou of Beings best! Who would not trust,
And love thy name? All those that know thee will.
Be this my choice, whatever be my lot.
Thus all is well; yea, infinitely well;
Thy glory and my happiness are one:
While that which works thy praise fulfils my joy—
This gives adversity another face.

LONGING FOR HEAVEN,

After leaving the company of Ungodly and contentious men.

Extracted from Miss Anthony's Memoirs, page 110.

"April 1753. Lord, when shall I put from this tempestous shore? I am weary of the world. I long for a calm, cool retreat, from noise and heat, and all the sordid clamours of earthly groveling souls. I hate the sulphu-

reous breath of calumny and detraction. My soul was made for harmony and love: and without this, immortality would be a curse, my being, a horrid torment. My soul abhors rancour and envy. I detest evil surmises, and love the balmy air, where peace and friendship reign unmolested; where sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper, never fly; nor clouds of smoke from the infernal pit, suffocate the air, nor taint, nor poison the dear associates. There I would fix my dear abode, wide from the wrangling wretch, who courts resentment and revenge; nor should his rage, nor should his yells, within the sacred realms be heard. My soul is near allied to spirits born and bred on high, where no resentment ever rises; nor is the vulgar passion, common to fools and madmen, with the sordid bull and bear, ever known there. There, sweet are their joys, and blest are their souls, where all unite in piety and love. Oh, I long to join the lovely band, nor would I ever quit the dear delights."

Reduced to Blank Verse.

When shall I leave this turbulent abode?
When launch from this tempestuous, noisy shore?
I'm weary of the world: I long to dwell
Where sordid, clam'rous din no more is heard.
The foul, sulphureous breath of calumny,
And base detraction, rancour, ill surmise,
Envy, and all malignity, I hate.
My soul was made for harmony and love:
Existence void of this a torment were,
And immortality itself a curse.

Oh for a dwelling on those balmy shores,
Where peace and friendship unmolested reign;
Where shafts of murd'rous malice never fly,
Nor clouds of smoke from the infernal pit
Can suffocate the air, poison, or taint
The dear associates—There be my abode,
Wide from the wrangler, who resentment courts,
Loves fierce contention, and provokes revenge:
Nor shall his furious rage, nor shall his yells
In all the sacred regions once be heard.

To th' inhabitants of heaven I feel allied,
Within whose minds resentment rises not;
Nor vulgar passion rages in their breasts,
Common to madmen, fools, and sordid brutes.
Sweet are their joys, their souls are doubly blest,
Where all unite in piety and love.
Oh how I long to join the lovely band,
Nor would I ever quit the dear delights.

MYSTERIOUS NATURE OF MAN.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psal. cxxxix. 14.

THE term 'fearful' is sometimes to be taken subjectively, for our being possessed of fear. In this sense it signifies the same as timid. Thus the prophet was directed to say to them that were of a 'fearful' heart, be strong. At other times it is taken objectively, for that property in an object, the contemplation of which excites fear in the beholder. Thus it is said of God, that he is 'fearful' in praises, and that it is a 'fearful' thing to fall into the hands of the living God. In this sense it is manifestly to be understood in the passage now under consideration. The human frame is so admirably constructed, so delicately combined, and so much in danger of being dissolved by innumerable causes, that the more we think of it, the more we tremble, and wonder at our own continued existence.

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!
How passing wonder He who made him such,
Who mingled in our make such strange extremes
Of different natures, marvellously mixed.
Helpless immortal, insect infinite,
A worm, a god—I tremble at myself!"

To do justice to the subject, it would be necessary to be well acquainted with anatomy. I have no doubt that a thorough examination of that 'substance which God hath curiously wrought,' ver. 15, would furnish abundant evidence of the justness of the psalmist's words; and even those things which are manifest to common observation, may be sufficient for this purpose. In general it is observable, that the human frame abounds with avenues at which enters every thing conducive to preservation and comfort, and every thing that can excite alarm. Perhaps there is not one of these avenues but what may become an inlet to death, nor one of the blessings of life but what may be the means of accomplishing it. We live by inhalation, but we also die by it. Diseases and death, in innumerable forms, are conveyed by the very air we breathe. God hath given us a relish for divers aliments, and rendered them necessary to our subsistence: yet, from the abuse of them, what a train of disorders and premature deaths are found amongst men. And where there is no abuse, a single delicious morsel may, by the evil design of another, or even by mere accident, convey poison through all our veins, and in one hour reduce the most athletic frame to a corpse.*

The elements of fire and water, without which we could not subsist, contain properties which in a few moments would be able to destroy us; nor can the utmost circumspection at all times preserve us from their destructive power. A single stroke on the head may divest us of reason or of life. A wound or a bruise of the spine may

* Mr. Fuller himself one day very narrowly escaped these tragical effects. He dined at a farm house at Sutton-in-the-Elms, Leicestershire, intending to preach there in the evening. The servant was sent into the garden to draw some celery; instead of which she brought in roots of hemloc, and mixed them with the salad. Mr. Fuller and the rest at table were soon taken very ill, but he managed to conduct the evening service, though attended with much pain and sickness, and retained a strong aversion ever afterwards to boiled mutton, which happened to be the dish provided on this occasion. Ed.

instantly deprive the lower extremities of all sensation. If the vital parts be injured, so as to suspend the performance of their mysterious functions; how soon is the constitution broken up. By means of the circulation of the blood, how easily and suddenly are deadly substances diffused throughout the frame. Through this fearful medium, not only the taint of vice rankles in the veins of the debauchee, but virtue itself may destroy us. The putridity of a morbid subject has been imparted to the very hand stretched out to save it. The poisoned arrow, the envenomed dart, the hydrophobic saliva, derive from hence their fearful efficacy. Even the pores of the skin, necessary as they are to life, may be the means of death. Not only are poisonous substances hereby admitted, but when obstructed by surrounding damps, the noxious humours of the body, instead of being emitted, are retained in the system, and become productive of numerous diseases, always afflictive, and often fatal to life.

From these few instances we may learn our absolute dependence upon divine preservation. So numerous are the avenues at which death may enter, that no human foresight can possibly render us secure for a single moment: and even those dangers which may in a measure be avoided, require for this purpose the regular exercise of reason; but reason itself depends upon a variety of minute causes, over which we have no controul. Instead of wondering at the number of premature deaths that are constantly witnessed, there is far greater reason to wonder that there are no more, and that any of us survive to seventy or eighty years of age.

> "Our life contains a thousand springs,
> And dies if one be gone:
> Strange, that a harp of thousand strings,
> Should keep in tune so long."

Assuredly, it can be ascribed to nothing short of the mighty power, and all-pervading providence of God. A proper sense of this truth, while it would prevent us from

presumptuously exposing ourselves to unnecessary injury, would induce us to commit ourselves to the divine protection in every danger which duty calls us to encounter.

Nor is this all. If we are 'fearfully made,' as to our animal frame, it will be found that we are much more so, considered as moral and accountable beings. In what relates to our animal nature, we are in most instances constructed like other animals; but in what relates to us as moral agents, we stand distinguished from all the lower creation. We are made for eternity. The present life is only the introductory part of our existence. It is that however which stamps a character on all that follows. How fearful is our situation! What innumerable influences is the mind exposed to, from the temptations which surround us. Not more dangerous to the body is the pestilence that walketh in darkness, than these are to the soul. Such is the construction of our nature, that the very word of life, if heard without regard, becomes a savour of death unto death. What consequences hang upon the small and apparently trifling beginnings of evil. A wicked thought may issue in a wicked purpose, this purpose in a wicked action, this action in a course of conduct, this course may draw into its vortex millions of our fellow creatures, and terminate in perdition, both to ourselves and them. The whole of this process was exemplified in the case of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat. When placed over the ten tribes, he first *said in his heart*, 'If this people go up to sacrifice at Jerusalem, their hearts will return to Rehoboam; and thus shall the kingdom return to the house of David.'* On this he took counsel, and made the calves of Dan and Bethel. This engaged him in a course of wickedness, from which no remonstrances could reclaim him. Nor was it confined to himself: for he 'made all Israel to sin.' The issue was, not only their destruction as a nation, but to all appearance, the eternal ruin of himself, and great numbers of his followers. Such were the fruits of an evil thought!

* 1 Kings xii. 26—30.

Oh my soul, tremble at thyself! Tremble at the fearfulness of thy situation; and commit thine immortal all into His hands, who is able to keep thee from falling, and to present thee faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy!

OUGHT A WICKED MAN TO PRAY?

THE declaimer who denied this position, seems to have had an eye to those passages of scripture, which declare 'the sacrifice and way of the wicked to be an abomination to the Lord;'* and to have concluded from them, that God does not require any sacrifice or prayer at their hands. But if so, why did Peter exhort the sorcerer to pray?† And wherefore is the fury of God denounced against the families that call not upon his name?‡ An hypothesis which flies in the face of the express language of scripture, is inadmissible; and the framer of it, to be consistent, should avow himself an infidel.

If he meant only to deny, that God requires such prayers as wicked men actually offer, the prayer of a hard, impenitent, and unbelieving heart, I have no controversy with him. God cannot possibly approve any thing of this kind. But then the same is true of every other duty. Wicked men do nothing that is good or wellpleasing to God: nothing which is aimed at his glory, or done in obedience to his authority; every thing that is done, is done for selfish ends. If they read the scriptures, it is not to know the will of God and do it; or if they hear the word, it is not with any true desire to profit by it. Even their pursuit of the common good things of this life is,

* Prov. xv. 8, 9. † Acts viii. 22. ‡ Jer. x. 25.

that they may consume them upon their lusts; hence the very 'plowing of the wicked is sin.'* Yet the declaimer himself would scarcely infer from hence, that it is not their duty to read the word of God, nor attend to the preaching of the gospel, nor pursue the necessary avocations of life: neither would he reckon it absurd to exhort them to such exercises as these.

The truth is, wicked men are required to do all these things, not carnally, but with a right end, and a right spirit. In this way Simon Magus, though 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' was exhorted to pray; not with a hard and impenitent heart, but with a spirit of true contrition. 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.' To repent and pray, is the same thing in effect as to pray penitently, or with a contrite spirit. Wicked men are required to read and hear the word, but not with a wicked spirit; and to plow the soil, but not that they may consume its produce upon their lusts.

There are not too sorts of requirements, or two standards of obedience, one for good men, and the other for wicked men; the revealed will of God is one and the same, however differently creatures may stand affected towards it. The same things which are required of the righteous, as repentance, faith, love, prayer and praise, are required of the wicked.† If it were not so, and the aversion of the heart tended to set aside God's authority over it, it must of necessity follow, that a sinner can never be brought to repentance, except it be for the commission of those sins which might have been avoided, consistently with the most perfect enmity against God! And this is to undermine all true repentance; for the essence of true repentance is 'godly sorrow,' or sorrow for having displeased and dishonoured God. But if in a state of unregeneracy, a man were under no obligation to

* Prov. xxi. 4. † John xii. 36. Acts iii. 19. Rev. xv. 4.

please God, he must of course have been incapable of displeasing him; for where no law is, there is no transgression. The consequence is, he can never be sorry at heart for having displeased him; and as there would be but little if any ground for repentance towards God, so there would be but little if any need of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. If in a state of unregeneracy he were under no obligation to do any thing pleasing to God, and were so far rendered incapable of doing any thing to displease him, so far he must be sinless, and therefore stand in no need of a Saviour. Where there is no obligation, there can be no offence; and where there is no offence, there needs no forgiveness. Thus the notions of this declaimer, who, I suppose, would be thought very evangelical, will be found subversive of the first principles of the gospel.

CREDULITY AND DISINGENUITY OF UNBELIEF.

An old man who travelled the country as a philosophical lecturer, was one evening entertaining his audience, which consisted chiefly of young people, by attempting to account for that famous pile of stones near Salisbury, commonly called Stone Henge. He supposed it might have been a temple: whether Saxon, Roman, or British, he did not say. Indeed his ideas seem to have gone far beyond every period of history with which we are acquainted. The principal thing on which he insisted was, its being used for viewing the heavenly bodies; and from this part of his hypothesis he drew some very singular conclusions. The structure, he supposed, originally faced the south; but that the points themselves, in a great number of years, change their positions; and as Stone

Henge did not now face the south, he concluded it was owing to this cause, and that from hence we might calculate how long it had been erected. By the mode of calculation which he adopted, it was easy to perceive, that in his account it must have existed *two hundred and seventy thousand years!* It is true, he did not proceed so far as to draw the conclusion, as that might have excited prejudices against what he had farther to advance; but the thing itself was plainly understood by the company.

In his course of lectures he also made mention of some very ancient writings, found in the Shanscrit language, and brought to light by Sir William Jones, in which mention was made of *this country*, as a kind of sacred place, to which pilgrimages were made in those very early ages; and if I am accurate in my recollection, he supposed Stone Henge might be a place of such resort.

Lately, looking into vol. iii. of the Asiatic Dissertations, I found something which reminded me of the old lecturer's assertion. It was in a dissertation of Lieut. Wilford's, 'On Egypt and the Nile, from the ancient books of the Hindoos.' I here found that the Puranas, or historic poems of the Hindoos, made mention of 'the sacred western islands,' as a place to which pilgrims in those early ages had been used to resort. 'Many brahmans indeed assert (adds Lieut. Wilford) that a great intercourse anciently subsisted between India and countries in the west; and as far as I have examined their sacred books, to which they appeal as their evidence, I strongly incline to believe their assertion.'

Thus far the supposition of our philosopher seems to be confirmed. The reader may suppose that I now felt a desire to ascertain, if possible, the *antiquity* of the Puranas. Surely, thought I, they are not *two hundred and seventy thousand years old!* On enquiry, I soon perceived that they must have been written *since* the time of the flood, by the manifest reference which they make to Noah and his three sons. The following translation by Sir William Jones, and which he declares to be minutely

exact, though in the hands of the readers of the Asiatic Dissertations, may be new to many others, and will serve to show that Indian literature, instead of weakening the authority of scripture, tends rather to confirm it.

From the Padma Puran.

"To *Satyavarman*, that sovereign of the *whole* earth, were born three sons: the eldest *Sherma*, then *C'harma*, and thirdly, *Jyapeti* by name. They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtue and virtuous deeds; skilled in the use of weapons to strike with, or to be thrown; brave men, eager for victory in battle. But *Satyavarman* being continually delighted with devout meditation, and seeing his sons fit for dominion, laid upon them the burden of government. Whilst he remained honouring and satisfying the gods, and priests, and kine, one day, by the act of destiny, the king having drunk mead, became senseless, and lay asleep naked. Then was he seen by *C'harma*, and by him were his two brothers called——To whom he said: what has now befallen? In what state is this our sire? By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again.

Having recovered his intellect, and perfectly knowing what had passed, he cursed *C'harma*, saying, Thou shalt be the servant of servants. And since thou wast a laugher in their presence, from laughter shalt thou acquire a name.* Then he gave to *Sherma* the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountains. And to *Jyapeti* he gave all the north of the snowy mountains; but he by the power of religious contemplation attained supreme bliss."†

* They say he was nicknamed *Hásyasila*, or the Laugher; and his descendants were called, from him, *Hásyasilas*. By the descendants of *C'harma*, they understood, says Lieut. Wilford, the *African Negroes*. Asiatic Diss. vol. iii. pp. 90, 91.

† Asiatic Dissertations, vol. iii. p. 262.

I will only add a part of the Eulogium on the life and writings of Sir William Jones, by the Hon. Lord Teignmouth, in his address to the Asiatic Society.

"He professed his conviction of the truth of the christian religion, and justly deemed it no inconsiderable advantage that his researches had corroborated the multiplied evidences of revelation, by confirming the Mosaic account of the primitive world. We all recollect, and can refer to the following sentiments in his eighth anniversary discourse:—'Theological enquiries are no part of my present subject; but I cannot refrain from adding, that the collection of tracts which we call, from their excellence, the Scriptures, contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age, or in any language. The two parts of which the scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance in form or stile to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Italian, Persian, or even Arabic learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man doubts, and the unrestrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired.'"

The old lecturer's desire of introducing the Asiatic Researches, in a way unfriendly to the scriptures, reminds us of the wish of a certain jealous king, and of his dealing with 'the wise men of the east,' in order to obtain it. The wise men of the east, it seems, are not to be drawn into such measures. Their business is to *do homage to the Messiah*, and not to join with his murderers.

THE LYING SPIRIT PERSUADING AHAB.

And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. 1 Kings xxii. 21—23.

WHEN Ahab sent for Micaiah, there was evidently no sincerity in his request. Like many others, who ask counsel of their friends, and even seek direction of God, not with a view to be influenced, but in hope of being countenanced by it, he was determined to go against Ramoth-gilead, let Micaiah say what he might. The messenger sent to call Micaiah, seems to have been furnished with a *secret* message; and tried what he could do at tampering with the prophet. From hence it appears evident, that Ahab did not desire to know the mind of God, but chose delusion. Micaiah came, and Ahab thus accosted him. 'Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?' Micaiah answered in a strain of irony (which might be very evident from his tone and manner of delivery) 'Go and prosper. The Lord will doubtless deliver it into the hand of the king:' for who can hesitate on the truth of that which has the testimony of four hundred prophets to confirm it!

Ahab felt the irony, and conjured him to be serious. Micaiah then assumed another tone, and told him the truth without reserve; and which amounted to nothing less than that he should lose his life in the battle. Ahab, full of rancour, appealed to Jehoshaphat, that he had told him beforehand what would be the effect of sending

for this man. Micaiah, like a man of God, now looked the very monarch in the face, and said, 'Hear the word of the Lord!' It may be thought incredible that I only should be right, and four hundred prophets in the wrong: I will relate a vision that will perfectly account for it.

I beheld the Lord, the great disposer of all events, sitting upon his throne, surrounded by the host of heaven. Fully acquainted with the whole of thy ungodly life, and viewing thee as ripe for destruction, he determined to destroy thee: and seeing that in this instance, thou hast preferred flattery to truth, he has determined to destroy thee by means of flattery. Know then, Ahab! that hell and all its agents, delusion and all its instruments, are under his controul: they go and come at his bidding. That spirit to whom thou hast sold thyself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, now desires thee for his prey. He that has seduced thee into sin, now asks permission of God to deceive thy prophets, that he may plunge thee into destruction: and God has granted him his desire. And that which Satan is doing for his own ends, God will do for his. There is as much of the judicial hand of God in a lying spirit having misled thy prophets, as of readiness in the evil one to entangle, and seize thee as his prey.

ON SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS,

In answer to two queries by a Correspondent.

1. "Ought we to ascribe any part of our conduct, which is not absolutely sinful, to the agency of Satan?"

There appears to have been nothing "absolutely sinful," in the conduct of the Corinthians towards the incestuous

person. On the contrary, they acted agreeably to an apostolic command, and discovered a commendable zeal for the honour of God, in excluding him from their fellowship. Yet the apostle is afraid, lest their zeal should carry them too far, and lead them to act imprudently. Hence he exhorts them 'to forgive, and comfort' the offender, and to 'confirm their love towards him, lest Satan should gain an advantage' against the interest of Christ, as well as against the party: 'for,' says he, 'we are not ignorant of his devices.' Now, that to which they are exhorted, respects the *manifestation* of their love to the offender, and not merely their being of a forgiving spirit, which the apostle supposes them to possess. Consequently, it was not malice, but *imprudence*, against which they are warned, and of which Satan might take advantage, to the prejudicing of men's minds against the gospel, as driving persons to despair. See 2 Cor. ii. 7—11.

2. "How are we to know in all cases, whether our actions be produced by the force of Satan's temptations, operating on the depravity of our will and affections; or whether those actions be the effects of our depravity merely, without Satanic influence?"

I freely confess, that I am unable to speak to this point *in any case.* Neither do I know what to ascribe to the Holy Spirit, or to holy angels, as being *conscious* of the influence of either. It is only the effect produced, of which I am conscious. I am taught in the scriptures to ascribe whatever is good, to the Holy Spirit. I am also taught in the scriptures, especially in the prophecies of Daniel, that holy angels have great influence on the minds even of princes; and consequently, on the great events of the world. But no one, I suppose, is *conscious* of any thing of the kind. We all know that the minds of men are influenced by thousands of causes without themselves. Man is a leaf shaken by every wind; the least accident may so affect him, as to give a turn to the most important concerns of his life. We also know, that no influence

from without us destroys our agency, or accountableness. If we were to take away a man's life, in order to obtain his property, we should not think of excusing ourselves by alleging, that we were *influenced to do so* by some person having told us that he was very rich.

I apprehend we are not so much to consider Satan as working immediately, as mediately. He is 'the god of this world;' the riches, pleasures, and honours of it, together with the examples of the wicked, are the means by which he ordinarily works upon the souls of men. The bird need not fear the fowler, if it avoids the snare; nor the fish the fisherman, if it do but shun the bait.

Respecting the *occasion* of the question, I beg leave to say, that the extraordinary exertions of the late excellent minister referred to, have in my judgment been noticed by some persons with undue severity. Had they properly attended to the account which Mr. PEARCE himself has given of this matter, every unfavourable idea would have vanished; and pity, blended with love and admiration, would have superseded every complaint. In the Memoirs of this dear man, p. 197, when writing, to an intimate friend, he thus expresses himself:—"Should my life be spared, I and my family, and all my connections, will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent the apothecary to me, and then first I learned, what I have since been encreasingly convinced of—that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle. And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me."—To another of his friends he also declared very seriously, that "if ever he incurred guilt of this kind, it was through error of judgment, respecting the strength of his constitution, and that he adopted a system of precaution as soon as he apprehended danger."

It has also been insinuated by some, that his persuasion that he ought to be a missionary, must have been a delusion, as appeared from the result; for he did not go. But if this be just reasoning, it was delusion also in *Mr. Grant*; for he was taken away almost immediately after his arrival at the scene of action. The desire likewise of *David* to build a house for God, must have been altogether delusion; though we are assured it was taken well of Him, by whom actions are weighed. The truth is, there are but few men who are proper judges of such a character. We are most of us at so great a distance from his spirit, as to be in danger of thinking such extraordinary zeal to be a species of extravagance.

CONVERSATION IN HEAVEN.

Mr. PEARCE *and Mr.* GRANT.

[*Pearce to himself.*] What a world have I left—what a world have I found! There my poor debilitated frame long confined my spirit in a state of imprisonment: but now I am free. As the dissolution of my frail tabernacle approached, looking as through interstices, I caught some transient glimpses of heavenly glory. I saw enough to make me long to be there, and to be where Jesus is: but oh, how small a portion did I know of him! Nay, how small a portion do I yet know of the heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths of his love: it passeth knowledge! But this shall be my theme. It is enough that I am with him, and that he will feed me, and lead me to living fountains of water; and that God hath already wiped away all tears from my eyes . . . . And is this heaven? . . . . And am I here? . . . . My Redeemer!

It was a true report that I heard of thee in the other world: but the half was not told me. Happy are thy people; happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee! . . . .

While the blessed man was thus recounting what he had seen and heard, he was interrupted by a convoy of angels, introducing an inhabitant of the earth; and report said, that he came from the eastern part of it, a quarter from whence but few of late ages had arrived at these blessed abodes. They were observed to present their charge to Him who had the keys of hell and of death, by whom they had been sent. After this he was introduced to those who were to be his everlasting companions.

Pearce. What my brother Grant! *

Grant. And is this my brother Pearce?

Pearce. It is: but how is it that I see you here? Were you drowned, or slain by an enemy?—Where are your companions? Do they live to serve our Saviour?

Grant. We were all safely landed, and my brethren are yet alive. I was taken away by a fever soon after my arrival.

Pearce. And did you see dear CAREY, and his companions?

Grant. No: I was denied that pleasure: but I heard of their welfare, and of their gladness on account of our arrival.

Pearce. 'How unsearchable are His judgments, and his ways past finding out!'

Grant. Is there no light to be communicated on these subjects here?

* Mr. Grant, one of the baptist missionaries, died on his arrival in India, soon after Mr. Pearce died at Birmingham, Oct. 10th, 1799. Mr. Fuller's great affection for Mr. Pearce, who was so ardently devoted to the missionary cause, induced him to touch on this delicate subject, too mysterious and too sacred to be proposed for imitation; nor would Mr. Fuller himself have entered upon it, but for the solicitation of a friend. ED.

Pearce. We know much more than we did; but we do not understand every thing at once, even here. God's designs are gradually unfolded as events transpire.

Grant. How long, my dear Pearce, have you been here? We felt deeply for you, when we passed the spot where you lay confined by sickness;* and during the whole of our voyage, you were always uppermost in our thoughts. We often feared that you might be gone beyond the reach of prayer, and therefore our petitions were generally offered up, on the supposition of your being in the land of the living.

Pearce. I have been here but a little while. At the time you were beating about in the Bay of Bengal, I received my discharge. I was long detained a prisoner, and during that time, you and your companions were near my heart.

Grant. But why was my mind stirred up to leave my country, and devote my life to the service of my Lord; when after all, he had determined not to employ me as a missionary?

Pearce. I have often wondered too, why my heart was drawn out in the manner it was towards the same object, and yet disappointed: and your case seems still more mysterious.

Grant. Whom do we see yonder, 'walking in his uprightness?'

Pearce. It is 'the sweet Singer of Israel.'

Grant. May we hold converse with 'the spirits of just men made perfect?'

Pearce. Yes, with perfect freedom.

Grant. Let us go then, and converse with him upon the subject. It was in his heart to build a house for God; yet he was not permitted to do it. He will tell us something that we know not.

* Plymouth, where Mr. Pearce remained for about two months, in the summer of 1799, in the hope of deriving benefit from his native air.

Pearce. Tell us, holy man: Hast thou seen the wisdom of God, in putting it into thy heart to build him a house, and yet preventing thee from fulfilling thy desire?

David. The house was built, though I did not build it.

Pearce. And God may build himself a house in the East, though we have not been permitted to raise it.

David. And though I was not permitted to build the house, yet I 'prepared for it with all my might.'

Grant. I am sure my dear brother Pearce has done the same.

David. Perhaps, if it had not been in my heart to build a house for God, it might not have been in the heart of my son Solomon.

Pearce. And was not the engagement of brother Grant the occasion of another engaging, who yet lives?

Grant. I believe it was.

Pearce. Who knows what good may arise from his labours.

David. Though I was not visibly present at the dedication of the house of my God, yet the fervent desire which I had put into my heart, constituted a part of the joy of that solemn day. In the psalm that was sung on that occasion, mention was made of 'David and all his afflictions.'*

Grant. And whenever the interest of our Lord shall be established in the East, and the history of it repeated, that which brother Pearce has wrought shall be spoken of as a memorial for him.

Pearce. And the story of a poor converted Infidel,† who left all to follow that dear Redeemer whom he had despised, shall not be forgotten.

* Psalm cxxxii. supposed to have been written by Solomon.

† An English gentleman resident in India, who was partially reclaimed from infidelity by conversation with the Missionaries, and afterwards established in the truth, by reading Mr. Fuller's publications on Deism and Socinianism, which the brethren had recommended to his attention.

David. If I was hindered from doing good, I might also be prevented from doing evil. Had Solomon my son been cut off, just when he had procured materials for the sacred edifice, his death would have been deeply regretted; yet then he had left the world with an unspotted character. As it was, he dishonoured God.

Pearce. I remember reading of a poor man, who being turned from a profligate course of life to the knowledge and love of Christ, was reproached by his former associates, and told that he would certainly return to his former practices. On this, he fell upon his knees before them all, and prayed to God, that if it would be so, he might rather die upon the spot . . . . and he died immediately! Who, but he that knows what is in man, can tell what evils we may have escaped.

David. I never shall forget the sacred joy of that day, when 'the people offered willingly.'* Many, who are now in these blessed abodes, have acknowledged that the sacred flame of love was first kindled in their bosoms on that solemn day.

Pearce. I shall never forget the sacred pleasure of those days, in which we engaged in prayer and praise, and cheerful contributions for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Grant. And might there not be souls converted to Christ by those opportunities? I am sure the disinterested conduct of dear Carey and his companions, operated not a little to convince me of the reality of religion.

Pearce. How was it with you and the brethren, during the voyage? Did you not begin your missionary labours among the poor ignorant sailors?

Grant. We did; and entertained considerable hopes that our labours were not in vain.

Pearce. If your voyage to the east were the means of rescuing but one poor sinner from destruction, it is more than adequate to all your labour.

* 1 Chron. xxix.

David. We knew of your undertakings, and partook of the joy.

Grant. And is it so, that the spirits of just men made perfect are acquainted with what is going on in the earth?

David. Can the angels of God be supposed to rejoice over a sinner that repenteth, and *we* be unacquainted with it, or uninterested in the event?

Pearce. I thought, even when in the body, that this would be the case, and told my brethren as much before my departure.*

Grant. I have sometimes thought the same. The subject of conversation between Moses, Elias, and our Lord, namely, 'his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,' has seemed to me to have been the topic which engaged the attention of the heavenly inhabitants, and that they were as full of it when they appeared on the holy mount, as the two disciples were when travelling to Emmaus.

Pearce. Blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! We will still watch the progress of this blessed work, and praise his name for every instance of success.

* In a letter dated May 2. 1799, while Mr. Pearce was in Devonshire for the recovery of his health, he addressed Mr. Ward and other missionaries, about to depart for India, in the following manner. "Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours. Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your success, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord." *Memoirs of Mr. Pearce*, p. 221.

THE NATURE OF TRUE VIRTUE.

Mr. HALL, in his justly admired Sermon on modern Infidelity, has brought forward some very plausible objections to President Edwards's definition of virtue, but which appear to be founded in misapprehension. The definition itself is fairly stated,—that "virtue consists in a passion for the general good, or love to being in general." Mr. Hall observes, that "the order of nature is, evermore, from particulars to generals: we advance from private to public affections: from the love of parents, brothers and sisters, to those more expanded regards which embrace the immense society of human kind." p. 51. And afterwards, in a Note, pp. 57, 58, he maintains that, on the President's principles, "virtue is an utter impossibility; because that the human mind is not capable of such *different degrees* of attachment as are due to the infinitely various objects of the intelligent system; also because that *our views* of the system being capable of perpetual enlargement, our attachments are liable to undue proportion, so that those regards, which appeared virtuous, may afterwards become vicious. And lastly, that if virtue consists in the love of being in general, or attachment to the general good, the particular affections are to every purpose of virtue useless, and even pernicious; for their necessary tendency is, to attract to their objects a proportion of attention, which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale."

"The question is," as Mr. Hall observes, "what is *virtue?*" Answer, *love.* But love to whom, or what? To being, says Edwards; and, as the supreme Being is the first and best of beings, it is to love Him supremely, and our fellow creatures in subordination to him. It is ob-

jected, that we cannot comprehend the supreme Being, and therefore cannot love him in proportion to what he is in the scale of being. True; and we cannot fully comprehend ourselves; yet we may love ourselves supremely.

"The order of nature," says Mr. Hall, "is evermore from particulars to generals; we advance from private to public affections; from the love of parents, brothers and sisters, to those more expanded regards, which embrace the immense society of human kind." But to this it may be replied—

1. Virtuous affection does not consist in natural attachment: if it did, birds and beasts would be virtuous, as well as men. Nor does genuine benevolence arise from those instinctive feelings as their root: if it did, all men, who are not 'without natural affection,' would be virtuous, benevolent characters. It may imply a high degree of depravity to have obliterated natural affection, though the thing itself has no moral good in it. Natural affection however, if exercised in subserviency to the divine glory, becomes virtuous; as are eating and drinking, and all other natural actions that are capable of being performed to a higher end.

2. The question does not relate to the order in which the human mind comes to the knowledge of objects, and so to the actual exercise of affection towards them; but to the order in which love operates, when the objects are known. If we were free from every taint of original sin, yet we should not love God before we loved our parents; and that because we should not know him first. We cannot love an object before we know it; but it does not follow from hence, that when we know both God and our parents, we must continue to love them first, and God for their sake. That which this writer calls "the order of nature," may indeed be so called, as it is the order established for our being brought to the actual exercise of our powers; but with regard to the argument, it is rather the order of *time*, than of nature.

"The welfare of the whole system of being must be allowed," says Mr. Hall, "to be *in itself* the object of all others the most worthy to be pursued; so that, could the mind distinctly embrace it, and discern at every step what *action* would infallibly promote it, we should be furnished with a sure criterion of right and wrong; an unerring guide, which would supersede the use and necessity of all inferior rules, laws, and principles." p. 55.

But it is not necessary to true virtue, that it should comprehend all being, or "distinctly embrace the welfare of the whole system." It is sufficient that it be of an expansive *tendency;* and this appears to be Edwards's view of the subject. A child may love God by loving godliness, or godly people, though it has as yet scarcely any ideas of God himself. It may also possess a disposition, the *tendency* of which is to embrace in the arms of good will, "the immense society of human kind;" though at the time it may not be acquainted with but few people in the world. Such a disposition will come into actual exercise, "from particulars to generals," as fast as knowledge extends. This however is not "private affection," or self love, ripening into an "extended benevolence, as its last and most perfect fruit;" but benevolence itself expanding, in proportion as the natural powers expand, and afford it opportunity.

MORALITY NOT FOUNDED IN UTILITY.

In a late excellent Sermon,* the author combats with great success, the notion of morality being founded in

* Mr. Hall's, on the "Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis," delivered on occasion of the General Fast, in 1803.

utility. On looking over some loose papers the other day, I found a short conversation on this subject, which took place a few years since between two friends, and which was taken down immediately after they had parted. It will occupy but a small space; and if you think it worthy of insertion, it is at your service.

C. I have been thinking of the reason why we are required to love God, and one another; and why the contrary is forbidden.

F. And what do you conceive it to be?

C. Would there be any such thing as sin in the universe, if it were unproductive of evil consequences?

F. You mean, would there be moral evil, if there were no natural evil arising out of it?

C. I do.

F. I allow that all moral evil tends to natural evil, as disorder in the animal frame tends to pain and misery: but we do not usually consider the effect of a thing as the reason of its existence. Instead of saying, it is wrong because it tends to misery; I should say, it tends to misery because it is wrong.

C. What idea do you affix to right and wrong, distinct from that of its good or evil tendency?

F. That which is in itself *fit* or *unfit*, or which agrees or disagrees with the relations we sustain to other beings, whether Creator or creatures. Thus it is commanded: 'Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is *right*.'

C. Yes, it is 'right:' but its being so, I conceive, arises from its tendency to render the universe happy.

F. Then it has no excellency *in itself*, but merely a *relative* one. Will you say, that because moral good tends to general happiness, therefore it must needs be what it is on that account?

C. What if I were to affirm this?

F. By the same mode of reasoning I might affirm, that truth would not be true, if it were not an object of utility: and as the first of all truths is the existence of

God, that God would not exist, if it were not for the advantage of the creation that he should exist.

C. This consequence is certainly inadmissible; but I can hardly see how you make it out.

F. Try it again. If moral good be moral good, because it tends to general happiness; why is not truth, truth, because it is of utility?

But farther: An action may tend to natural good, though it be performed from the worst of motives, as the relieving of the needy, from ambition; yet with such a motive there is no moral good in it. If therefore you will maintain your position, you must give up all purity of motive as essential to morality; and maintain, with Volney, that *intention* is nothing. You will also find your opinion largely defended by Hume, who has written a treatise to prove, that all virtue arises from its *utility:* and that as "broad shoulders and taper legs are useful, they are to be reckoned among the virtues!" I hope you will not be elated with your company.

NATURE OF INDWELLING SIN.

Query. Is the love of sin eradicated from the regenerate? Though it lives in them, is it not their sorrow and detestation?

Answer. If the question had been, whether the love of sin be the governing, prevailing, and habitual principle in the regenerate; there could be no doubt of its being answerable in the negative. Holiness is represented as 'the law of the believer's mind.' It is the governing and habitual principle of his soul, and that which gives it its leading bias. It is that which rules in the ruling power

of the soul—'the mind;' which is equal to saying that it reigns. If a rightful prince, after being driven from his throne by a rebellion, should so far recover it as to rule in the proper place of rule, and compel his enemies to quit the reins of government, and seek refuge in their private haunts, he is truly said to reign. Thus the grace of God, becoming 'the law of the mind,' and the power of carnality being driven, as it were, to take its main residence in 'the members,' working not by open daylight, but by deeds of darkness, the former, and not the latter, is truly said to have the dominion over us. And as every being is denominated by his governing disposition, so holiness is that from which believers are denominated in the scriptures: it is that which gives them their *character.*

There is a sense in which good men, as well as others, are *sinners,* as every good man will acknowledge: but when the scriptures describe them, it is not as sinners, but as *saints.* The character of *sinners,* distinguishes the unregenerate. Though, strictly speaking, 'there is no man that doeth good, and sinneth not,' yet believers are described as not doing evil, but good. 'He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil is of the wicked one—He that is born of God sinneth not—He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' All these modes of speaking are descriptive, not of what is universal, but of what is general and habitual. Sin is the constant course of the wicked, but righteousness of the righteous.

But to say that 'the love of sin is *eradicated* from the regenerate,' is saying that sin has no place in their affections, and that their affections are never entangled by its influences: and wherein this differs from saying that they are sinless, I do not understand. If sin has no place in the affections, it has no place in the soul; for the affections are the proper seat of good and evil. As the whole of duty is summed up in love, so the whole of sin may be summed up in the contrary.

Moreover, if sin has no place in our affections, it has none in our *choice;* for choice is an affection of the mind, by which it prefers one thing to another, or likes this rather than that. When the acts of the will are distinguished from those of the affections, it is rather a distinction of degree than of nature. But if all evil choice were eradicated, all sin would be eradicated. Whatever there was, it must absolutely be involuntary; and that which is such is not sin. It is impossible for the mind to feel any conscious guilt on account of it, any more than for the contortions of a convulsed state of the body.

Dr. Owen, in his admirable treatise on 'The Nature of Indwelling-sin,' has proved, I think, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the essence of all sin lies in aversion of heart, and that this aversion is 'universal, to all of God, and in all of the soul.' Nor need we have recourse to the judgment of Dr. Owen: experience will teach every reflecting mind, that he sins not, but as his will and affections are drawn away from God, after things which are forbidden.

I have observed this opinion to be maintained on very different grounds. Some worthy characters, observing the loose conduct of certain professors, and their attempts to excuse themselves by pleading that believers are not free from the love of sin, and therefore they ought not to be criminated or suspected on that account, may have been tempted to maintain the contrary, as necessary to the honour of God and religion. But God does not require us to defend his cause, by stretching any doctrine beyond what it will bear. Such characters ought rather to be told, that every plea for self indulgence taken from the sins of God's people, indicates a *prevailing* love of sin, which is inconsistent with true religion.

In other instances, the same thing is maintained by loose characters themselves, who while they are living in sin, contrive to transfer the *love* of it from themselves to the 'old man' that is within them. Paul, speaking of himself as a renewed man, represents the working of evil

in him as contrary to the *habitual* bias of his soul; as repugnant to the *governing* principle of his mind; and therefore as being not *him*, but sin that *dwelleth in him*. Paul however was not a loose character; nor did he speak in this manner from a desire to excuse himself in sin. That which he said of himself in an improper or figurative sense, such people understand literally, and infer that sin in them is absolutely involuntary. The opposite principle of good and evil, denominated 'the old and new man,' they consider as distinct *agents*, or as voluntary beings, who carry on a contest, of which the man himself is only an involuntary spectator. But as in all the exercises of grace, it is *we* that repent, believe, love &c.; so in all the exercises of evil, it is *we* that sin, and that must be accountable.

The Querist asks, 'Whether sin, though it dwells in the regenerate, be not to their sorrow and detestation.' Undoubtedly it is; and herein the experience of Paul is opposed to theirs, who make use of his language to excuse themselves in sin. The body of sin was to him 'a body of death,' which rendered him 'wretched,' and from which he longed more than any thing to be 'delivered.' But a detestation of sin, unless it were perfect in degree, does not imply the *eradication* of love to it. The same soul, as influenced by opposite principles, may be the subject of both hatred and love. In proportion however as one operates, the other must necessarily subside.

PRESERVATIVES AGAINST BACKSLIDING.

It is usual to confine the idea of a backslider to a good man; but I apprehend, the scriptures do not use the term always in this sense. Backsliding always supposes

a religious profession, but does not necessarily imply that this profession is sincere. The ungodly Israelites, who had not the fear of God in them, are termed backsliders. Jer. ii. 19. Saul and Judas would be accounted backsliders, in the scriptural sense of the term, as well as David and Peter. The backslidings of the latter were partial, and of the former total.

But I shall suppose the querist to be a good man, and that he feels a proneness to depart from the living God. Perhaps some particular temptation may entangle him, or easy-besetting sin perplex him: he may have had several narrow escapes from open scandal, and may be apprehensive that, in some unguarded moment, he may be drawn into that which would ruin his future peace and usefulness.

Were I a stranger to such exercises, I should be ill qualified to write upon the subject. The case of backsliders has lately been much impressed upon my mind, and a few thoughts upon the subject will probably soon appear in print.* Great numbers, I am persuaded, among professing christians, come under this denomination. At present, I shall only offer three or four directions to the consideration of the querist, or any other whose case they may suit.

1. Every means should be used to stop the avenues of temptation, or prevent its coming in contact with the evil propensities of the heart. If there be nitre in our habitations, it becomes us to beware of fire. Such was the counsel of our Lord to his disciples, in a season of peculiar danger. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' He had himself entered that field, and came out a conqueror; but he knew what was in man, and counselled them rather to avoid than court the contest. In cases where the heart begins to be seduced by temptation, it will soon become restless, solicitous, and impor-

* Mr. Fuller's excellent treatise, entitled "The Backslider," was published the same year, 1801.

tunate; it will moan after it, and be exceedingly fruitful in devices to get into the way of it. It will persuade conscience, for once at least, to be silent; it will blind the mind to the evil, and paint the desirableness of the good; and if all this will not do, it will promise to be only a looker-on, or that, thus far it will go and no farther.—But if thou hast any regard to God or his cause, or to the welfare of thine own soul, 'consent thou not.' Temptation leads to sin, and sin to death. Whatever company, amusement, occupation, or connection, has frequently 'caused thee to offend;' that is the eye that requires to be plucked out, lest thy soul bleed in the end, beneath the stroke of God's displeasure.

2. Beware of the *first stages* of departure from God. All backslidings begin with the heart, from whence are 'the issues of life.' Private prayer, it may be, at first becomes wearisome; there is no communion with God in it. It is then occasionally neglected; hence public ordinances cease to afford their wonted pleasure, christian society is dropped, the world takes up your attention, and you have little or no time to spare for religion. Some carnal acquaintance, perceiving you to be coming, draws you on. He recommends you to read some one of the liberal productions of the times, by which you are to learn that there is no need to be so rigid in religion, and no harm in frequenting the theatre, or in devoting at least a part of the Lord's day to visiting or amusement. These are a few of the seeds of death, from whence have sprung many a bitter harvest.

> "Beware of sin then, crush it at the door;
> If once 'tis in, it may go out no more."
>
> BUNYAN.

3. If thou hast in any degree been drawn aside, give no rest to thy soul till thy sin is crucified, and thy conscience reconciled by the blood of the cross. It is too common for sin to be worn away from the memory by time and new occurrences, instead of being washed away

at the gospel fountain. But where this is the case, the stain is not removed, and its effects will sooner or later appear, perhaps in a form that may cause the ear of every one that heareth it to tingle. 'He that honoureth me, saith the Lord, will I honour; and he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed.' If we care so little for the honour of God's name, as to be unconcerned for secret faults, we may expect he will care as little for the honour of ours, and will give us up to some open vice, that shall cover us with infamy.

4. If some extraordinary temptation, or easy-besetting sin perplex thee, bend not thine attention so much to the subduing of that particular evil, as to the mortification of sin in general; and this not so much by directly opposing it, as by cherishing opposite principles. We may heal an eruption in a particular part of the body, and yet the root of the disease may remain, and even be gathering strength. We may also be employed in thinking of our sins, without gaining any ascendency over them: on the contrary they may, by those very means, obtain an ascendency over us.

If we go about to quench a fire by directly contending with it, we shall presently be consumed by its flames; but by applying the opposite element, it is subdued before us. It is thus that the scriptures direct us: 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' The heart cannot be reduced to a vacuum: if spiritual things do not occupy it, carnal things will. It is by walking with God, and conversing with the doctrine of the cross, that we shall become dead to other things; and this will go to the root of the evil, while other remedies only lop off the branches.

SCRIPTURAL USE OF MEATS.

Query. How is it that the apostle presses the discontinuance of eating meats offered to idols, sometimes on the bare *inexpediency* of it, and at other times on the absolute *unlawfulness* of it? 1 Cor. viii. 9—13 with x. 14—21.

Answer. The querist is certainly right as to the fact, for both these kinds of dissuasion are used in 1 Cor. viii. to x. To account for it, it may be proper to observe, that eating part of the sacrifices of the city, which might be provided at the public expense, had been the custom in all former times; and it was probably thought a hardship to be forbidden it. Some of the members of the church at Corinth proceeded so far as to resume their old stations at these public feasts; and justified themselves on the ground, that they were not so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between idolatry and good eating and drinking; they did not *mean* by it to do any honour to the idol, but merely to partake of the repast. Yet by their example many weaker brethren, who still retained the prejudices of their heathen education, were actually drawn into a superstitious veneration of the idol.—The thing also was in itself wrong, as it was having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

To remedy this evil, the apostle first reasons with them *on their own principles.* Be it so, as if he had said, that there is no evil in it, and that you by your superior knowledge, (thus satirising their vain pretences) can walk over these coals without being burnt; yet that is more than your weaker brethren can do. You make them sin, though you be sinless yourselves.—In this view he allows their conduct, for argument sake, to be lawful, but denies it to

be *expedient*. But having thus proved the impropriety of their conduct, even upon their own principles, he then proceeds to evince its utter *unlawfulness*; calling it 'idolatry,' chap. x. 14, and proving it to be so on this general principle, that he who voluntarily associates with others in any act, is a partaker of that act. On this ground says he it is, that in the Lord's supper we hold professed *communion* with Christ; that those who among the jews até of the sacrifices, partook of the altar; and upon this ground, you cannot eat and drink things offered to idols, without having fellowship with demons.

VINDICATION OF ST. PAUL.

Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. 2 Cor. xii. 16.

THIS passage is so far from being friendly to the exercise of guile, that it is a manifest disavowal of it. It is an *irony*. The apostle does not describe what had actually been his conduct, but that of which he stood accused by the Corinthian teachers. They insinuate that he was a sly crafty man, going about 'preaching, persuading, and catching people with guile.' Paul acknowledges that he and his colleagues did indeed 'persuade men,' and could not do otherwise; for 'the love of Christ constrained them.' (Chap. v. 11, 14.) But he indignantly repels the insinuation of its being from mercenary motives. 'We have wronged no man,' says he; 'we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.' (vii. 2) Having denied the charge, he shows the *absurdity* of it. Mercenary men, who wish to draw people after them, have an *end* to answer: and what end, says Paul, could I have in view, in *persuading* you to embrace the gospel? Have I gained

any thing by you? When I was with you, was I burdensome to you? No: nor as things are, will I be burdensome. *Yet, being crafty,* forsooth, *I caught you with guile!*

Oh, said the accusers, he affected great disinterestedness at first, that he might the more easily take you in afterwards. He declined taking any thing with his own hands, with the intention of sending others to collect it for him at a more convenient season! 'Did I then make a gain of you,' replies the apostle, 'by any of them whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the same spirit; walked we not in the same steps? Chap. xii. 17, 18.

Nothing is more evident, than that 'all guile and hypocrisy were laid aside' by the primitive ministers. 'Our rejoicing is this,' says the apostle; 'the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.' Chap. i. 12.

PROPER AND IMPROPER USE OF TERMS.

The *first* of the three following papers has already appeared in vol. viii. of the Author's works; but as it was there given incomplete, and was originally followed with some animadversions from the pen of a respectable writer, which induced Mr. Fuller more largely to defend his positions; the Editor judged it expedient to insert the entire series in their proper connection, and hopes the partial repetition will be excused.

NOTWITHSTANDING the number of words found in every language, they are far from being equal to the number of ideas in the human mind. Hence it is that one and the same term has a variety of meanings; hence also arises the distinction between the proper and improper, the literal and figurative use of terms. The word אבב abib, the first in the hebrew lexicon, signifies, (1) *verdure* or greenness, Job viii. 12: (2) an ear of corn on its first appearance, being then of a *green* colour, Lev. ii. 14: (3) a month in the jewish year, falling somewhere about March or April, when corn in that country began to *ear.*

Here we see the progress of language, and the causes of different ideas being affixed to the same term. When a name is wanted to express an idea, men do not think of making a new one; but call it by something already known, to which it bears a *resemblance;* and as this resemblance is frequently confined to one leading property, and sometimes to one that is not so, it hence comes to pass that the more objects a term is applied to, the farther it commonly advances from the original idea. In mentioning the month Abib, for example, a jew would think nothing of *greenness* or *verdure,* which is its true and primary meaning; but merely of the time of his forefathers coming out of Egypt, and of the institution of the passover. Yet in arguments from the meaning of scripture terms, it becomes us to ascertain the true, primitive, or proper sense, and to measure all secondary and figurative applications by it as a standard. It appears to me that, many important errors have been introduced and defended for want of attending to this rule, which is dictated by common sense. Instead of defining a term according to its proper and primary meaning, and resting nothing upon its secondary or figurative applications, any farther than they accord with it, the reverse has been the practice. The proper meaning has been made to give way to the figurative, rather than the figurative to the proper.

EXAMPLES.

1. *The Universalist,* finding the terms used to express the duration of future punishment frequently applied to things which *have an end,* endeavours from thence to set aside the evidence of its eternity. That is, he grounds his argument on the secondary and figurative application of terms, to the setting aside of that which is primary or proper. Thus αιων, though its proper meaning is *always being,* is made to mean no more than *age* or *ages;* and αιωνιος, though it literally signifies *everlasting* or *endless,* yet is said to mean no more than *age-lasting.* Thus, instead of measuring the secondary sense of words by the primary, the primary is measured and excluded by the secondary; which goes to exclude all just reasoning, and to introduce everlasting wrangling. It were just as reasonable to contend, that the English word 'turnpike' signifies a road made by act of parliament, though it is so called merely in a way of contraction, and because such roads have tolgates, and such gates a turnpike for the accommodation of foot passengers.

2. *The adversaries of the doctrine of atonement* have taken the same method. "By a *sacrifice,*" says Dr. Taylor, "is meant a symbolical address to God, intended to express before him the devout affections, by significant emblematical actions; and consequently, whatever is expressive of a pious and virtuous disposition may rightly be included in the idea of a sacrifice; as prayers, thanksgivings, expenses, labours, &c." It is easy to see that the *primary* notion of a sacrifice is here explained away, or lost in the crowd of secondary meanings; by which any thing may be proved or disproved, as the writer pleases.

3. Let it be dispassionately and impartially considered, whether the principal objections brought against the ordinance of *baptism* being administered exclusively by *immersion,* do not originate in the same cause. The word

βαπτιζω, it is said, will not *always* agree with the idea of immersion. It is applied to the *effusion* of the Holy Spirit, and to some other things wherein immersion is inadmissible. Be it so: still it amounts to no more than this, That the term βαπτιζω, like almost every other term, has its secondary and figurative sense. Its *proper* and *primary* meaning is allowed by the most learned pædobaptists in all ages to be, that which the antipædobaptists contend for; and this is the only meaning which ought to be called in to settle the dispute. By the contrary method, it were easy to prove that the English word immersion does not mean dipping or plunging: for if a person be very wet by rain, it is common to say he is immersed, merely because he is as wet as if he had been immersed.

To generalise the meaning of a term, in order to include its secondary or figurative senses, is the way to lose its true and proper sense; and if applied universally, might go to undermine all the great doctrines of christianity.

The rule of fair and just reasoning, with respect to the use of terms, as I have always understood it, is, *That every word be taken in its literal and primary sense, unless there be any thing in the connection which requires it to be taken otherwise.* Now apply this rule to the foregoing examples, and the result will be this—

The Universalist must either deny, that the proper or primary meaning of αιων and αιωνιος is *always being* and *eternal;* or else prove that when these terms are applied to the duration of future punishment, *there is something in the subject which requires them to be taken, not in a proper, but improper sense.*

The adversaries of the atonement also must either set aside the proof, that the proper and primary notion of a sacrifice includes in it the idea of *expiation;* or show cause why this meaning should not attach to it, when applied to the sacrifice of Christ.

Thus also those who object to *immersion,* as being the only proper mode of baptism, should either disprove what has been acknowledged by more than *eighty* of their most

learned writers, that the native and proper signification of the word is to dip or plunge;* or show cause why it should not be taken in this sense, when applied to the ordinance in question.

PROPER AND IMPROPER USE OF TERMS.

In Reply to the objections of the Rev. Samuel Greatheed.

THE animadversions of your correspondent require a reply, not so much on account of what relates to baptism, as to the general principle which he attempts to overturn. Mr. Greatheed† will give me credit, that I had no unkind design against my pædobaptist brethren; but he must excuse me in saying, if pædobaptism will keep bad company, it must take the consequences.

By "measuring the secondary and figurative application of a term by that which is proper or primary," I did not mean to suggest that the primary sense is to be invariably retained; but merely that it ought to be so, *unless there be any thing in the connection which requires the contrary.* The primary, literal, or proper sense of a word, is its true sense, and the *standard* of all others which it may bear by way of figure or allusion. My mind is sufficiently expressed by Dr. Williams. "The improper or figurative use of terms, says he, does not alter the literal sense: otherwise the very foundation of figures and allusions would be destroyed." The rule also which I have laid down is the same as his: "It is not fair nor agreeable to the just rules of criticism, he says, to interpret the words

* Booth's "Pædobaptism Examined," vol. i. chap. 2.

† This elegant writer had, in this correspondence, assumed the name of *Diereunetes*, which it is no longer necessary to retain.

of an author allusively, improperly, and metaphorically, *except when plain necessity urges.*"*

I do not deny that the figurative sense of a term may, in many cases, be equal, and even of superior importance to the literal one. If, for instance, we were to understand the first promise, 'he shall bruise thy head,' of a descendant of Eve occasionally killing a serpent; the meaning would be puerile, in comparison of what it is generally, and no doubt justly applied to. But here *the connection requires a departure from the literal meaning.* Let the same be proved of any other term, and I acquiesce.

Your correspondent does not wish to set aside the primary meaning of a term, in favour of one that is figurative, "when it can be clearly ascertained;", but in various cases he thinks it is "very difficult to decide, of two senses, which is its primary, and which its figurative meaning." I suppose he intends to say, that words in a long course of time change their meaning; and that the original sense, or that which was attached to a term in the earliest usage, may be lost. There may, for ought I know, be some truth in this remark; but it does not appear to me to affect the argument. Allowing it to be so, and that what was at first only an allusive or figurative sense, may have become the earliest sense with which we are acquainted; yet as all words are mere arbitrary signs of ideas, that which is the secondary sense of a term, might have been its primary sense, provided it had been so applied; and if the primary sense be lost, the secondary of course may become primary. In other words, it may become by general consent the *obvious* sense of the term, there being no anterior idea excited in the mind when it is expressed. If then we can ascertain what was the *obvious* meaning of the word, *at the time when the author wrote,* we thereby ascertain, to every purpose of just reasoning, what is its primary or proper meaning, and ought to abide by it, *unless the connection requires a different one.*

* "Antipædobaptism Examined," vol. ii. p. 146.

If this cannot be ascertained, there is no certain conclusion to be drawn from the word, any more than from 'selah' in the psalms, and we ought to rest no argument upon it.

With respect to the notion of the universalists, which is chiefly founded upon the supposed ambiguity of the terms, αιων and αιωνιος, your correspondent half concedes to them, that these terms might originally express only a limited duration. He cannot decide, as it would seem, whether they were "primarily used of visible or invisible objects." At least, he does not choose to rest his opposition to that system upon such a ground. Yet every lexicographer that I have seen, makes no scruple of asserting, that the *proper* meaning of αιων is *always being*, or *eternity*; and of αιωνιος *everlasting*, or *endless*. It is an opinion, I am aware, which has been advanced by great authorities, that terms which now signify spiritual and invisible objects, were originally applied to those which are sensible and visible. But however true this may be in many cases, it will not hold good in all.

Mr. Locke, in what he says on this subject,* argues as if he thought language to have been a human invention, and that men learned it by slow degrees: whereas it was manifestly concreated with man from the beginning. We might as well argue from the gradual progress of strength and knowledge in an infant, that Adam must have been created a child, and have grown in wisdom and stature as we do, as that all the names by which he expressed spiritual and invisible objects were first applied to those which are sensible and visible. On this principle we must either suppose him to have had no ideas of his Creator, of his own immortality, or of endless life; or if he had, that he had no terms by which to express them. But neither of these suppositions will consist with the important station which he occupied, or the account which is given of his communion with JEHOVAH ELOHIM. To

* Essay on Understanding, book iii. chap. 1.

what visible or sensible object, I ask, could the names of the everlasting God be applied, before they were applied to him?

Mr. Greatheed thinks the meaning of a word "may be made perfectly clear and certain, by the connection in which it stands. For example: when the word *everlasting* is applied to God, it always signifies *without end:* when applied to a hill, it can only mean of long duration." To the same purpose says the Universalist, "Where a word is used in relation to different things, the subject itself must determine the meaning of the word." Whether the absurdity of this position has not been proved beyond all reasonable contradiction, in my sixth letter to Mr. Vidler, and in the seventh and eleventh letters of Mr. Jerram's Review, the readers of those pamphlets will easily determine.

If αιων and αιωνιος, with their corresponding words in hebrew, be allowed to have been originally applied to limited duration, and this to be their *proper* meaning, I acknowledge myself unable to prove, *from the use of these terms,* the doctrine of eternal punishment, or of eternal happiness, or even of the eternal existence of God. I might conclude indeed, with Mr. Greatheed, that *everlasting,* as applied to God, plainly signifies, *without end.* This however would not be proving the eternity of God, from the word everlasting being applied to him; but merely that everlasting in this case means endless, because of its being applied to God, whom we know, *from other sources of evidence,* to be eternal. Thus the terms by which endless duration is commonly expressed in the scriptures, are reduced to silence, proving nothing but what can be proved by the subject without them.

Your correspondent thinks that, "when the term everlasting is applied both to the states of the righteous and the wicked, after the day of judgment, nothing but the most inveterate prejudice can interpret it in different senses." Allowing this to be a solid argument, it only

proves that the doctrine may be defended from other sources of evidence, as well as from the proper meaning of the term; but it is giving up the argument from that source. It is allowing that the term everlasting stands for nothing, unless *you* can prove from the connection, that it must mean endless: whereas by the other mode of reasoning, the word itself, wherever it occurs, establishes the doctrine; unless *they* can prove from the connection, that the proper sense is inadmissible. But farther: the above is only *argumentum ad hominem*, which is adapted to silence an opposer, rather than convince him. I do not say it is unfair reasoning with persons who hold the eternity of future rewards: but Universalists, rather than admit of eternal punishment, will call this in question. This is actually done by Mr. Vidler:* and if we concede with your correspondent, that the word αιωνιος itself proves nothing, I acknowledge that I do not perceive how the doctrine of endless punishment, or of endless rewards, is to be maintained from Matt. xxv. 46. We must, as far as I see, relinquish that important post, and fly to some other source of evidence. We may assert, that "the term being applied to the states of the righteous and the wicked, *after the day of judgment*," requires it to be taken in the sense of endless; but we should be told, this is begging the question; the very point at issue being, whether every thing that takes place after the day of judgment be endless.

Respecting *baptism*, your correspondent "willingly admits, that I might introduce that topic for no other reason than that it appeared to me an apt illustration of the rule I was endeavouring to establish for the interpretation of scripture; and hopes that I shall as readily give him credit for a proper motive, in entering a protest against such an application of my principle." As to *motives*, I had no other than a desire to ascertain what is truth; and I give him credit that such is his. But why must not the

* Letters to Mr. Fuller, p. 95.

principle in question be applied to pædobaptism, as well as other things? He does not mean to suggest, I presume, that this subject is exempted from examination by the courtesy of the country. If the principle be false, or misapplied, I hope we shall be able to discover the fallacy, or wherein the misapplication consists.

Mr. Greatheed calls in question two things:—(1) Whether the word βαπτιζω primarily signifies to immerse—(2) If it do, whether this be the *only* meaning that ought to be called in to settle the dispute.—With respect to the first, my assertion may, as he observes, be "too comprehensive to be supported by due evidence in your publication."* I was aware of this at the time, and therefore referred to Mr. Booth's "Pædobaptism Examined," vol. i. chap. 2, where no less than *eighty two* of the most learned pædobaptists acknowledge the *native, primary,* or *proper* meaning of the word to be IMMERSION. Your correspondent in answer, refers to Dr. Williams's "Antipædobaptism Examined;" and I in reply, may refer to Mr. Booth's "Defence." The reader who wishes to examine this subject to the bottom, will find, I presume, in these three performances all that is necessary for the purpose.

Your correspondent asks, in the second place, "If the primary meaning of the word βαπτιζω were to immerse, yet why should that be the *only* meaning called in to settle the dispute." I answer—(1) Because, as Dr. Williams says, "It is not fair, nor agreeable to the just rules of criticism, to interpret the words of an author allusively, improperly, and metaphorically, *except when plain necessity urges.*" Let it but be proved, that plain necessity urges the proper meaning of βαπτιζω, when applied to the ordinance of baptism, to be given up in favour of one that is improper, and I consent to call it in.—(2) Because, as Mr. Greatheed himself allows, "the primitive sense of a term, *when it can clearly be ascertained,* ought not to be accommodated to any of its figurative applications:" and

* Biblical Magazine, 1803.

that it can easily be ascertained in this case, is granted in the supposition. All secondary and figurative meanings therefore, by his own concession, ought to be excluded in the settling of this controversy.

But your correspondent supposes, that though the word βαπτιζω should be allowed primarily to mean immersion, yet that a secondary or improper sense of the term, might be that on which the primitive christians acted. "Wherefore is it impossible, he asks, that the first christians should have used the term, with as little idea of immersion, even had that been its primary sense, as the jews had of *greenness*, when they spoke of the month abib."—Nothing that I have advanced supposes this to be "impossible." But it lies upon my friendly opponent to prove that *it must have been so:* otherwise, according to Dr. Williams's and his own acknowledgment, it is "unfair, and contrary to the just rules of criticism," to suppose this to have been the case. I can prove that when the term abib is applied to a month, *it must needs be taken in a figurative sense;* as it would involve an absurdity to translate it as in Job viii. 12, by the abstract term *greenness*. Let him prove the same *necessity* for affixing a figurative meaning to βαπτιζω, and his point is gained.

Mr. Greatheed goes farther: he affirms, that "when the term βαπτιζω is specifically used for the initiatory ordinance of the gospel dispensation, its application *must be admitted to be figurative.*" Indeed! But wherefore? If instead of this assertion, which appears to me to be utterly unfounded, he had given evidence of it, it had been to purpose. Let him but *prove* that the word, when applied to baptism, *requires* to be understood in a secondary or improper sense, or that to understand it properly would involve an absurdity; and I say again, his point is gained. If he succeed in proving this however, he will disprove what he says he has "long since been led to apprehend—that its primary meaning is not immersion." I suppose he means *ablution;* for if the primary meaning of βαπτιζω be ablution, and baptism were originally ad-

ministered by immersion, the term, with respect to that ordinance, must have been applied in its literal, and not in a figurative sense.

PROPER AND IMPROPER USE OF TERMS.

In Reply to the Rev. Samuel Greatheed.

YOUR correspondent intimates, that some things in my last tended to "provoke asperity." Nothing was farther from my design: but if by what I considered a stroke or two of pleasantry, I have excited any such feelings, I sincerely beg his pardon, and will endeavour to avoid every thing of the kind in future. It never was my intention to rank pædobaptists with universalists or socinians, in the manner which his note represents; but merely to point out their agreement *in one principle of reasoning;* and I should think, notwithstanding his assertion, he would be sorry to be put to the proof of it.*

With respect to the principle of interpretation, he thinks "nothing more is necessary, than to bring into *one point of view* the variations in my manner of stating it." By this it would seem that I have shifted my ground, and in effect conceded the matter in dispute. At first, my statement was thus expressed: 'In arguments from the meaning of scripture terms, it becomes of importance to ascertain the true, primitive, or proper sense, and to measure all secondary and figurative applications by it as a standard.' Afterwards, it seems, I *modified* this principle,

* In this and the following paragraph, the Editor has omitted a few personalities and other momentary circumstances, as totally unconnected with the subject in debate, and less deserving the attention of the reader.

requiring only 'that every word be taken in its literal, primary, or proper sense, unless there be any thing in the connection or in the subject which *requires* it to be taken otherwise.' And lastly, I am contented with saying, 'If we can ascertain what was the obvious meaning of a word, *at the time when the author wrote*, we thereby ascertain to every purpose of just reasoning, what is its primary or proper meaning.' Whether any "change has occurred in my judgment on this subject, or whether we have only misunderstood each other," he does not determine; but seems to think, that as to the general principle, we are now nearly agreed.

In answer, I must say, there is no alteration in my judgment: the whole therefore must be attributed to misunderstanding. With respect to the *first* statement, it never entered my mind that all words are to be understood literally, or properly; but merely that the literal is the *standard* sense, or that all allusive meanings are to be measured by that to which they allude. But the answers of Mr. Greatheed proceed upon the supposition, that I was pleading for the primitive sense of the term "being *invariably* adhered to." It is only on this supposition that what was afterwards said, could be considered as "a modification of my principle." The truth is, I held no principle that required modifying. I never for a moment thought of maintaining any other idea than that 'every word should be taken in its literal, primary, or proper sense, unless there be any thing in the subject that requires it to be taken otherwise.' In proof of this, I could refer to two pamphlets, of which you know that I approve; and in which this subject is more fully handled than can be expected in these papers.*

With respect to my *last* "variation," as it is called, it was merely in answer to *an exception which he had made to a general rule*, owing to the difficulty in many cases, of ascertaining which is the primitive, and which the figura-

* Letters to Vidler, Letter vi. Scrutator's Review, Letters vii. xi.

tive sense of a word. To this I answered, that where the primitive sense of a word was *lost*, or became uncertain, it was sufficient for all the purposes of just reasoning to consider the *obvious* idea conveyed by it, at the time when the author wrote, as its primary meaning. But this can have nothing to do with words whose primitive meaning is *not* lost, and therefore nothing to do with the present dispute. The amount of all that I have stated is this:—the primary, literal, or proper meaning of words, is their standard meaning, and that which always ought to be adhered to, *unless* there be any thing in the connection which requires a departure from it: and should a case occur, in which it cannot clearly be decided what was its primitive meaning, it is sufficient to ascertain what was its obvious meaning, at the time when the author wrote.*—In all this I can perceive no "variation" of judgment.

To allow of an expedient in a particular case, is very different from adopting it as a general rule, where that case does not exist. I have contended, and do still contend, that the primitive meaning of the terms, αιωνιος and βαπτιζω, is not lost; that it can be "clearly ascertained;" and consequently, that a recourse to the sense in which they are used in the new testament, *in order to determine it*, is unnecessary, and contrary to fair reasoning. I have no doubt of what would be the issue of an impartial enquiry, even upon that ground; but there is no justice in setting the meaning of a word afloat, when the ordinary methods of decision in all cases have fixed it.

Surely my respected opponent will not deny, that the proper meaning of αιων is "clearly ascertained" to be

* Chambers, in his Cyclopædia, says, under the word *proper*, "In respect of words it denotes their immediate and peculiar signification, or that which is directly and peculiarly attached to them; in which sense the word stands opposed to figurative and metaphorical." And Barclay, under the word *figure*, says, "In rhetoric, any mode of speaking by which words are used in a sense different from their primary and literal meaning." MS. Note by Mr. Fuller.

always being, and that of αιωνιος to be *everlasting*. Is it not to be lamented then, that he should undermine the argument against the Universalists from this ground, and endeavour to rest the doctrine of endless punishment, on the term αιωνιος being so "obviously used in the new testament to denote what is strictly everlasting, that he is not aware of any instance in which the connection requires a different sense to be admitted." Were I a universalist, I would not wish for a fuller concession, by which to overturn his principle. To give up, as he does in effect, the original use of the term antecedently to its being adopted by the apostles, and to rest his faith upon its being *always* applied by them to unlimited duration, is in my opinion, whatever be his design, to betray the truth. A universalist might reply as follows—You are mistaken, sir. It is obvious that αιων, though sometimes used in the endless sense, which we never deny, yet in other places is applied to the temporary existence of the present world, and to the *ages* and *times* of limited duration.* It is also obvious, that αιωνιος, though it sometimes means eternal, yet in other places is applied, like αιων, to limited duration; namely, to the *ages* or *times*, since the beginning of the world.† What proof therefore is there of the endless duration of future punishment from the use of these terms, which are generic, including all degrees of duration, unlimited and limited?

To this reasoning *I* should reply, by granting that the obvious design of these terms, in certain connections, is to express the idea of an *age* or *ages*; but that this is not their primary, literal, or proper meaning; and therefore ought not to be applied to the duration of future punishment, *unless* there were something in that subject, as there is in the others, which rendered the literal meaning inad-

* Matt. xiii. 39. xxviii. 20. John ix. 32. Acts iii. 21. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Ephes. iii. 9. Col. i. 26. Heb. i. 2.

† Rom. xvi. 25. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus i. 2. comp. with Ephes. i. 4. 1 Pet. i. 20. See Parkhurst.

missible. But how my opponent could answer the objection upon *his principles*, it remains for him to show. To me it appears that, by his method of reasoning, we should always be at sea, and without a compass; unable to prove scarcely any divine truth from the words by which it is expressed, inasmuch as almost all words are used in more senses than one. I wish he would carefully and candidly read "Scrutator's" seventh and eleventh Letters on this subject.*

Mr. Greatheed, as if to depreciate the primary sense of the term αιωνιος, speaks of its being "invented by the heathens," and thinks that I cannot believe it to have been "created or revealed." I question whether any language, dead or living, can be proved to have had its origin in human invention. The account of the origin of all languages, appears to be given in the eleventh chapter of Genesis; and all that men have done, seems to have been to modify, compound, and change them into different forms. But whatever was the origin of this and other terms, they were adopted by the Holy Spirit as the medium of conveying divine truth; and if the sacred writers meant to be understood, they must, one would think, have used them in the ordinary acceptation in which they were used by those who spake and wrote in the greek language. That they applied them to new objects, is true; but it does not follow that they changed their meaning. In the writings of Aristotle, αιων properly means *always being*, no less than in the epistles of Paul.†

"Upon the same ground, says Mr. Greatheed, "I have formed my judgment of the terms, βαπτιζω and βαπτισμος. In whatever sense the heathens, who invented these terms, may have used them, it appears to me that the writers of the new testament apply them so constantly to the signification of *a sacred cleansing*, that I am not aware of an instance in which the connection requires a different

* Letters to a Universalist: by Rev. Charles Jerram.

† Fuller's Letters to Vidler, pp. 53, 54, Note.

sense to be admitted. I therefore consider this the obvious meaning of those words at the time, and in the circumstances in which the authors wrote." On this passage I would offer the following remarks—

1. My worthy opponent is sufficiently aware, that βαπτιζω was used originally by the greek writers to express immersion. But they were "heathens!"* And will he affirm that the word was so applied by heathens only? Did not the Septuagint translators of the old testament, and Josephus, so apply it? If proofs of this be called for, they will be produced.

2. The word βαπτω, from whence βαπτιζω is derived, it will not be denied, is used in the new testament for immersion. Thus in John xiii. 26. 'He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have *dipped* it.' Luke xvi. 24. "Send Lazarus, that he may *dip* the tip of his finger in water.' Rev. xix. 13. 'He was clothed with a vesture *dipped* in blood.' In these sentences there is no idea of "cleansing" of any kind; and in the last, the reverse of it.

3. Dr. Williams, to whose work Mr. Greatheed refers us, allows, and says, "*It is universally agreed among the learned,* that both βαπτω and βαπτιζω, etymologically, and according to their *radical, primary,* and *proper* meaning, are justly rendered by the words *tingo* and *mergo,* to tinge or plunge."† But every one knows, that to *tinge* is the opposite of, to cleanse. One would think that this acknowledgment were sufficient to settle the meaning of the word. And, as Dr. Williams elsewhere says, it is "neither fair, nor agreeable to the just rules of criticism, to interpret the words of an author allusively, improperly,

* Mr. Fuller afterwards added in a MS. Note, that Mr. G. in alleging, "that according to his statement the scriptures were not sufficient to determine the meaning of words, without going among the heathen," might as well have said, That the grace of God is sufficient to make a christian, without being indebted to nature in first making him a man.

† Antipædobaptism Examined, vol. ii. p. 30.

or metaphorically, except when plain necessity urges," it must lie on him and his brethren, before they plead for any thing short of immersion being christian baptism, to prove that the primitive sense of the term in this instance involves an absurdity, and therefore that a secondary one requires to be admitted.

4. The term *baptism*, as applied to the sufferings of Christ, conveys a full idea of immersion, but none of "cleansing."

5. That water baptism, which is the christian ordinance, generally includes the idea of "cleansing," may be allowed; but it is only in a secondary or consequential sense, as he that is immersed in water is thereby cleansed. *Cleansing*, in water baptism, is that which its opposite *staining*, is in a vesture being dipped in blood: it is not the thing itself, but its necessary effect. Such is the idea conveyed in Acts xxii. 16. 'Be *baptised*, and *wash* away thy sins.' To render the first of these terms *cleansed*, would make the sacred writer utter a mere tautology.

"If the apostles used the term βαπτισμος merely for immersion, then, it is said, every person who has been immersed, whether for health, diversion, or punishment, is a baptised person." True, he is so, though not with *christian* baptism.

"But if something more than simple immersion is meant, when the apostles speak of the baptism of their converts, and yet the primary and proper meaning is nothing but immersion, then the apostles used that term in a secondary or figurative sense, when they applied it to the initiatory ordinance of the christian dispensation." If there be "no flaw" in this argument, Mr. Greatheed thinks his point is gained. I think there *is* a flaw in it, and that it lies in confounding the *act* with the *end*, or the design to be answered by it. An act, say that of *eating*, may be one and the same, *whatever be the end of it*; whether refreshment, or a showing forth of the Lord's death. Nor is the term designed to express any thing more than the act: the *design* is to be learned from other

terms connected with it, and not from that. To represent different ends as giving a secondary or figurative meaning to the term which expresses the action, is what I apprehend no writer ever thought of on any other subject. At this rate, if I be said to *walk*, simply, or without an end, the term is literal: if for health, or to see a friend, it becomes figurative; and if to meditate and pray, like Isaac, it becomes still more figurative! The truth is, if I be not greatly mistaken, to baptise, to eat, or to walk, are each expressive of the actions, *whatever be the end;* and the term is no less literally used in the one case than in the other.

The last argument of Mr. Greatheed's, proceeds upon a principle which should not have been taken for granted; namely, that *βαπτισμοι* signifies, *any sacred cleansing.* The 'divers baptisms' among the jews (to which the word *βαπτισμοις*, by the way, is applied, rather than to the christian ordinance) may relate not to divers *modes* of baptising, but to the divers *cases* in which persons and things were required to be immersed in water, and which cases were numerous and diverse. Thus, or to this effect, it is expressed by Grotius. Were I to speak of *divers* journeys, which my worthy friend has undertaken to promote the interest of evangelical religion, it would indeed imply some kind of difference between them; but it were putting an unnatural force upon the words to understand them as intimating, that in every journey he adopted a different *mode* of travelling.

DIVINE MUNIFICENCE.

Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Psal. cxlv. 16.

THIS passage expresses a plain and important truth, in a stile of peculiar beauty and simplicity. It represents the Divine Being as the Father of the whole creation, surrounded with an innumerable family, whose eyes all wait on him for daily food, while he, with paternal goodness, opens his liberal hand, and satisfies all their wants.

The *desires* however which God satisfies, are those only of his own creating. Men have a number of artificial wants, self-created appetites, and sinful gratifications; but God has not promised to supply these, nor would it comport with his wisdom that the profusions of his bounty should be thus misapplied. Those desires only which are natural and essential to man are provided for in the economy of providence, and these shall be satisfied.

Though God satisfies the desire of *every living thing*, yet not all in the same way, but according to their nature and circumstances. Many of his creatures are like the lily; they toil not, neither do they spin, but receive the bounties of providence ready prepared for them. Others, like the ant, prepare their meat in the summer, and lay it up in storehouses and barns. Man, though he liveth not by bread only, yet is doomed to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, and must labour for the meat that perisheth. Thus judgment is mixed with mercy, and it is a part of the divine goodness to render labour necessary to human life. Idleness is a soil which produces abundance of sin, as well as destroys our relish for the good we receive. Yet such is our dependence on divine care,

that except the Lord command a blessing, all our labour is in vain. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the encrease.

In order to supply the wants of creation, it is only necessary that the Lord should *open his hand*, and the desire of every living thing is satisfied. The indigence of man renders great labour, foresight and contrivance necessary, in order to supply his wants. But the great Proprietor of all, needs only to open his hand, and the earth is full of his riches, and the whole creation is replenished with the profusions of his goodness. If he shuts up his hand, the heavens become brass, and the earth is as iron under our feet.

This language is intended rather to represent God's *ordinary* conduct towards creation, than what is universally the case. There are seasons of famine, when the Lord appears to shut his hand, on account of the sins of man. There are also cases more common than those of famine, when such a scarcity of provisions has been felt, that multitudes have not only laboured under the hardships of poverty, but have been smitten through for want of the fruits of the field. Luxury and covetousness have also contributed in many instances to encrease the distress of the poor and needy; but this is owing to the sins of men, and not to the want of divine goodness in making provision for all; for it is the general intention of providence to 'satisfy the desire of every living thing.'

The proofs of divine munificence are so abundant, that it is difficult to make a distinct enumeration. The following particulars may suffice.

The rich supplies of which we constantly partake, proclaim the goodness of God. These cannot be ascribed to our own labour as the proper cause: the whole of human skill is only that which applies the bounties of heaven to our various uses, but does not furnish them. We can produce nothing: we can only modify, change the form, and apply to different purposes the various stores of good which providence bestows upon us. We

are as really dependent on God for daily food as Israel in the wilderness, when fed with bread from heaven by a continual miracle, though our dependence is not so visible, nor so sensibly felt.

The number and magnitude of the wants of creatures may convince us, that nothing short of the alsufficiency of God can supply them. How large the quantity of vegetable and animal productions is required in one day for the sustenance of a single town, a city, a nation—for the whole world! And yet what is a city, a nation, a world of men, when compared with the whole creation, which everywhere teems with life, and whose wants are all to be supplied. The air, earth, and seas abound with animated beings: and whose providence could superintend, or bounty supply, a family of such amasing extent, and whose necessities are so various and so vast? Oh Lord! The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season.

The means by which our supplies reach us, afford additional proof of the care of God over us. He does not provide for us immediately, so much as through the medium of second causes; and though we may be insensible of that hand which puts all in motion, yet is it no less engaged than if we were supplied by miracle. There is a connection of causes in all the works of God: every part of the creation tends to supply the wants of the other; and what is this but the operation of His hand, who hath so arranged and connected the different orders of beings as to render them mutually subservient? The earth abounds with verdure, the air with salubrity, the clouds pour forth their waters upon the earth, the sun its genial rays, and all the elements are enriched with blessings for man: but all these are only the opening of God's hand. Tender parents have supplied our wants, during our infancy and youth; endeared connections have been formed, which have proved a source of perpetual enjoyment; in seasons of difficulty, affectionate friends have kindly aided us, and supplies have come from quarters

the least expected. And yet these are but the means which the Father of mercies has employed for the satisfying of our desires, while he himself is the great source from whence all our comforts are derived.

What then shall we render to the Lord, for all his benefits? All the return which he demands of us is that of a thankful heart. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' But where has been our gratitude and praise? The worst thing that was said of one of the worst of men was, 'He hath eaten at my table, and lifted up his heel against me.' How awful the idea, to be an enemy to God amidst all this profusion of goodness; and what an aggravation in the conduct of the sinner, to despise these riches, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth him to repentance.

If such be the bounty of providence, what encouragement have we to trust in the Lord under all our wants and difficulties. With what ease can he supply us! By how many ways unknown to us can he give a favourable turn to our affairs! And what proofs have we of this in the late abundant harvest. (1802) But lately we were as a nation on the brink of ruin: our affairs at home and abroad were highly disastrous, and pregnant with encreasing calamity. But behold, how easily the Lord can change the face of adversity into gladness. The earth is full of his riches; he hath crowned the year with his goodness, and his paths have dropped fatness upon us. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

But if such be the bounties of his providence, what must be the riches of his grace. If such be the opening of his hand, what must be the fulness of his heart. If he so abundantly satisfies the desires of nature, much more those of grace. That which is done generally in one case, is done universally in the other. Not one seeking soul shall perish for want of spiritual good, nor any desire be unsatisfied which terminates in Christ. 'He

will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.'

While we cherish gratitude for temporal blessings, let us not rest satisfied with them as our portion. God gives these to all, to the wicked as well as to the righteous. To Nabal he gave flocks and herds in abundance, and to Nebuchadnezzar all the kingdoms of the world. But let us rather covet Joseph's portion; not 'the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof;' but 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.' With Jabez, let us desire to be 'blessed indeed;' and with Mary, choose 'the better part, which shall never be taken away from us.'

If to supply all creation, it is sufficient that God opens his hand only, what must the blessings of Redemption be, which could only be procured by the blood of Christ. In respect to power, God was sufficient for the latter, as well as the former; but power alone could not accomplish it. There were difficulties in the way of communicating spiritual blessings, which nothing short of an infinite sacrifice could remove: and of these 'there is not a gift his hand bestows, but cost his heart a groan.' How invaluable the blessings which come to us through such a medium; and how far superior in importance to all the riches of the universe.

Can we survey these proofs of divine beneficence, and not feel the most powerful motives to kindness and liberality to the poor and needy? Shall we not be followers of God as dear children, and be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect; who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust? The exercise of genuine benevolence assimilates us to his likeness, and confers on us the exalted dignity of participating in his felicity; while selfishness debases us to the lowest state of meanness, and deprives us of the most luxurious enjoyments.

Reader! Has the Lord opened his hand, and satisfied thy desires; are thy garners full, affording all manner of

store? Remember what the Lord hath commanded thee: 'Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress; of that wherewith thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him.' Deut. xv. 7—14.

VANITY OF THE HUMAN MIND.

The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. Psal. xciv. 11.

SURELY it is the design of God in all his dispensations and by all the discoveries of his word, to stain the pride of all flesh. The dust is the proper place for a creature, and that place we must occupy. What a humbling thought is here suggested to us. Let us examine it.

(1) If vanity had been ascribed to the meaner parts of the creation; if all inanimate and irrational beings, whose days are as a shadow, and who know not whence they came, nor whither they go, had thus been characterised, it had little more than accorded with our own ideas. But the humiliating truth belongs to man, the *lord* of the lower creation; to man, that distinguished link in the chain of being, which unites in his person mortality and immortality, heaven and earth. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of *man*, that they are vanity.

(2) Had vanity been ascribed only to the exercises of our sensual or mortal part, or of that which we possess in common with other animals, it had been less humiliating. But the charge is pointed at that which is the peculiar glory of man, the intellectual part, his *thoughts*. It is here, if any where, that we excel the creatures which are placed around us. We can contemplate our own

existence, dive into the past and the future, and understand whence we came, and whither we go. Yet in this tender part are we touched. Even the *thoughts* of man are vanity.

(3) If vanity had been ascribed merely to those loose and trifling excursions of the imagination, which fall not under the influence of choice, a kind of comers and goers, which are ever floating in the mind, like insects in the air on a summer's evening, it had been less affecting. The soul of man seems to be necessarily active. Every thing we see, hear, taste, feel or perceive, has some influence upon thought, which is moved by it as the leaves on the trees are moved by every breeze of wind. But 'thoughts' here include those exercises of the mind in which it is voluntarily or intensely engaged, and in which we are in earnest; even all our schemes, contrivances, and purposes. One would think, if there were any thing in man to be accounted of, it should be those exercises in which his intellectual faculty is seriously and intensely employed. Yet the Lord knoweth that even these are vanity.

(4) If during our state of childhood and youth only, vanity had been ascribed to our thoughts, it would have been less surprising. This is a truth, of which numberless parents have painful proof; yea, and of which children themselves, as they grow up to maturity, are generally conscious. Vanity at this period, however admits of some apology. The obstinacy and folly of some young people, while they provoke disgust, often excite a tear of pity. But the charge is exhibited against *man*. 'Man *at his best estate* is altogether vanity.

(5) The decision proceeds from a quarter from which there can be no appeal. *The Lord knoweth it*. Opinions dishonourable to our species may sometimes arise from ignorance, sometimes from spleen and disappointment, and sometimes from a gloomy turn of mind, which views mankind through a distorted medium. But the judgment given in this passage, is the decision of Him who cannot

err; a decision therefore to which, if we had no other proof, it becomes us to accede.

But that which is here declared as the result of divine omniscience, is abundantly confirmed by observation and experience. Let us take a brief view of the thoughts of man, as exercised on two general topics:—The world that now is, and that which is to come.

I. With respect to the present world, consider what multitudes of thoughts are employed in vain.

1. In seeking satisfaction where it is not to be found.—Most of the schemes and devices of depraved man, go to the indulging of his appetite, his avarice, his pride, his revenge, or in some form or other to the gratifying of himself. Look at the thoughts of such a man as Nabal. 'Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give to I know not whom?* Or of such a man as Haman; now aspiring to be the man whom the king delighteth to honour; now contriving the death of a whole people, in revenge of the supposed crime of an individual.† Such, alas, is a great part of the world to this day. What desolations have come upon the earth, through the resentments of a few individuals! And those whose situation has afforded them the greatest scope for self-gratification in all its forms, are generally the farthest off from satisfaction.

2. In poring on events which cannot be recalled.—Grief, under the bereaving strokes of providence, to a certain degree, is natural, it is true, and allowable; but when carried to excess, and accompanied with despondency, and unthankfulness for continued mercies, it is a great evil. I knew a parent who lost an only child, and who never after appeared to enjoy life. It seemed to me, that if his spirit had been expressed in words, they would have been to this effect: Lord, I cannot be reconciled to

* 1 Sam. xxv. 11. † Esther iii.

thee for having taken away the darling of my heart, which thou gavest me! All such thoughts are as vain as they are sinful, seeing none can make straight what God hath made crooked.

3. In anticipating evils which never befal us.—Such is our folly, that, as though the evils which necessarily attend the present state were not enough for us to carry, we must let loose our imaginations, and send them into the wilderness of futurity in search of ideal burdens, to make up the load. This also is vanity.

4. To these may be added, the valueing of ourselves on things of little or no account.—If providence has given one a little more wealth than another; if he lives in a better house, eats better food, and wears better apparel; what a multitude of self-important thoughts do such trifles breed in the mind! But all is vanity, and rejoicing in a thing of nought.

5. In laying plans which must be disconcerted.—The infinitely wise God has laid one great plan, which comprehends all things. If our's accord with his, they succeed: if not, they are overturned, and it is fit they should. Men, in their schemes, commonly consult their own private interest; and as others are carrying on similar designs for themselves, they meet, and clash, and overturn one another. Thus men, partly by their plans being at variance with that of God's, and partly with those of their fellow creatures, are ever exposed to disappointment and chagrin. Their lives are wholly occupied in building Babels, having them thrown down, and fretting against God and their neighbours, on account of their disappointments.

In looking at the struggles of different parties for power, whether in a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy, one sees a dangerous rock, which multitudes are climbing at the utmost hazard, and from which great numbers fall and perish: and the same spirit operates through all degrees of men, according to the opportunities which they enjoy.

II. Let us see what are man's thoughts with regard to religion, and the concerns of a future life.

It might be expected that if in any thing they be other than vanity, it is in this. The thoughts of a rational and immortal creature, upon its eternal interests, one would think, must be serious and solemn. When the objects of thought are—God—our accountableness to him—our sin against him—our salvation from it—or condemnation for it: surely we shall not trifle, and deceive ourselves! Yet, alas, so far is man from excelling in this solemn department, that there is nothing on which he thinks to so little purpose. The truth of this remark will appear from the following questions—

1. What are the thoughts of the heathen world about religion?—In them we see what the thoughts of man, left to himself, amount to. To call them vanity, is to call them by a tender name. I speak not merely of the common people, who are inveloped in ignorance and superstition, but of their wisest philosophers. To what do all their enquiries about God, the chief good, amount? To nothing at all. All is vanity! A babe in the christian religion, with a page of God's word in his hand, knows more than they have been able to discover in the space of three thousand years.

2. What are all the thoughts of the christian world, where God's thoughts are neglected?—Men who have the bible in their hands, but who, instead of learning the mind of God in it, and there resting contented, are ever bent on curious speculations, prying into things beyond their reach, vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind; to what do their thoughts amount? Nothing. They may presently lose themselves, and perplex others; they may obtain the flattery of unbelievers, and compliment one another with the epithets of candid and liberal; they may comfort themselves in the idea of being moderate men, and not like those bigots who refuse to yield, or make any concessions to the objections of unbelievers: but all that

they gain is, the friendship of the world, which is enmity to God. Were a monument erected to the memory of all those who have perished, by falling from the precipice of unscriptural speculation, it could not have a more appropriate motto than this: 'Vain man would be wise.'

3. What is all that practical atheism, which induces multitudes to act as if there were no God?—Great numbers of people in every part of the world, whatever they may call themselves, are practical atheists. They 'work iniquity in the dark, and say in their hearts, The Lord seeth us not: the Lord hath forsaken the earth.'* The Lord, they think, takes no cognizance of the world now, whatever he may have done formerly; but leaves us to shift for ourselves, and do as well as we can.—Such characters there were in the times of David; and whose presumptuous folly seems to have given occasion for the words on which these reflections are founded. They are denominated 'proud;' described as 'triumphing and boasting' in their wickedness; as 'uttering hard things;' as 'breaking in pieces God's people, and afflicting his heritage;' as 'slaying the widow and the stranger, and murdering the fatherless:' yet, as saying, 'The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard.' Well did the psalmist admonish them, saying 'Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen (who are without the light of revelation) shall not he correct those who possess and despise it? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.'

4. What are all the unbelieving self-flattering imaginations of wicked men, as though God were not in earnest, in his declarations and threatenings?—Nothing is more solemnly declared than that, 'Except we be converted, and become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom

* Ezek. viii. 12.

of God—That whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap—That neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God—and that without faith it is impossible to please God.'* Yet the bulk of mankind do not seem to believe these things, but flatter themselves that they shall have peace, though they add drunkenness to thirst; that to talk of a man, born in a christian land, requiring to be born again, is enthusiastical; that God is merciful, and will not be strict to mark iniquity; and that if we do as well as we can, that is, as well as we can find in our hearts to do, the Almighty will desire no more. The vanity of these thoughts, prevalent as they are in the world, will appear, if not before, when God shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.

5. What are the conceits of the self-righteous, by which they buoy up their minds with vain hopes, and refuse to submit to the righteousness of God?—Of the two firstborn sons of man who presented their offerings to God, one came without a sacrifice; and the greater part of professed worshippers in all ages, it is to be feared, have followed his example. It is deeply rooted in every human heart,—that if the displeasure of God be appeased towards us, or if he show us any favour, it must be on account of some worthiness found in us. To go to God as utterly unworthy, pleading the worthiness of a Mediator, and building all our hope of acceptance on his obedience and sacrifice, is a hard lesson for a proud spirit. Yet, till we learn this, we in effect learn nothing; nor will God accept our offering, any more than he accepted the offering of Cain.

Such is the vanity of man's thoughts, in things of everlasting moment. But it may be asked, Are *all* the thoughts of men of this description? No: the charge is directed

* Matt. xviii. 3. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Heb. xi. 6.

against men as depraved, and not as renewed: for though there be much vanity in the thoughts of the best of men, yet it is not mainly so. There are thoughts, which, though we are not sufficient of ourselves to obtain them, yet being imparted to us by Him in whom is all our sufficiency, are not vanity. If we think of God with approbation, of sin with contrition, of ourselves as nothing, of Christ as all, of earth as the house of our pilgrimage, and of heaven as our home; this is thinking justly, as we ought to think. Such thoughts also are an earnest of that state, where themes of unutterable glory shall for ever present themselves; and where all our powers, being corrected and sanctified, shall ever be employed in exploring the wonders of grace.

THE MORAL EXCELLENCY OF FAITH.

A letter to Dr. Stuart of Edinburgh, May 1797.

I THINK I can perceive, that Mr. M'Lean's great object is to cut up self-righteousness, and hence it is that he disapproves of Mr. Simeon's statement.* Faith, according to Mr. M'Lean, must not only have no moral efficacy towards our acceptance with God, but there must be no *fitness* between faith and salvation, or in God's bestowing salvation upon believers rather than unbelievers. Yea, lest we should at last be justified by our own moral

* The Rev. Mr. Simeon of Cambridge delivered a sermon at Edinburgh, which was afterwards printed. Mr. M'Lean published some strictures upon it, in a pamphlet entitled "David and Jonathan," which was transmitted by Dr. Stuart to Mr. Fuller, accompanied with his own reflections. The above reply to this letter, produced an elaborate epistle from Mr. M'Lean, the answer to which has already appeared in Morris's MEMOIRS of Mr. Fuller, pp. 317, 318, second edition. ED.

excellency, faith is considered as having nothing of moral excellence in it; but to be a mere assent of the understanding, in which the will has no concern. But I would ask—

1. If faith be a mere assent of the understanding, and have nothing of moral good in it, how can it be an object of *command?* How can it be a *duty,* and how can unbelief be a *sin?* I know of no better criterions than these, by which to distinguish things natural from things moral. Tell me of something else, as well as faith, which is a mere exercise of the intellectual faculty, in which the will has no concern, and which notwithstanding is a *duty,* and the omission of it a *sin.* Is it not the completest contradiction of which we can conceive, to speak of a commanded duty which has nothing moral in it? To me it appears, that nothing can be the object of command but what is moral.

2. May not faith include the acquiescence of the heart in God's way of salvation, and so be a moral excellency; and may there not be a fitness in God's justifying persons who thus acquiesce, without any foundation being laid for boasting? Though faith be a moral exercise, yet I do not consider that it is on account of its morality, but its relation to Christ, that justification is ascribed to it. For this reason it is, as I suppose, that we are said to be justified *by faith,* rather than by repentance, or love, or hope. Faith bears such a relation to Christ, that, in being justified by it, we are 'accepted in the beloved.'

3. I imagine you consider me as confounding faith and love, faith and the fruits of it. Mr. M'Lean, when at Kettering, observed on this subject, "that the scriptures speak of faith, hope, and charity as *three;* but you appear to me to confound them." To this I answered, and do still answer, that faith, hope, and charity *are three* in some respects, but not in all. They are three, considered with respect to their objects. The object of the first is revealed truth, of the second a future good, and of the last the holy amiableness of God, or whatever bears his image. But your argument requires them to be so distinct, as that no

one of them should include any portion of the other: but so distinct they are not. I prove it thus: Does not hope imply *desire?* Mr. M'Lean granted it did. And does not desire include *love?* He acknowledged it did, and said that "hope was a modification of love." Then, I replied, your objection is answered.

4. Mr. M'Lean pleads for the term 'faith' being taken in its ordinary acceptation, alleging that it has no definition or description which it would have had, if it were to be understood in a new sense. To this I answer—(1) Is not the term 'justify' used in scripture in a sense different from what it is used in courts of judicature? There it is opposed to pardon, here it includes it. Yet there is no definition or description given of this term in the scriptures.—(2) Why does not Mr. M'Lean reason the same concerning the term 'heart?' Here he pleads for a new sense, as if it were put merely for the understanding, and yet there is no definition or description given of this, any more than of the other.—(3) It appears to me that the ordinary meaning of the term faith, on certain subjects, includes an exercise of the heart, much the same as knowledge does. Mr. M'Lean speaks of believing or perceiving the loveliness of divine things. Can he distinguish this from loving them? If he can, I cannot. It is somewhat like the rays of the sun, in which light and heat are united.

5. God is said to justify the 'ungodly.' Of this, Mr. Booth, in his late publication, has laboured to make something. Mr. M'Lean seems also to rest pretty much upon it. I understand this passage as describing the state of the person, in himself considered; or that God does not justify, with an eye to any goodness in him, but on account of the righteousness of his Son. And how can you or any person, unless he hold the doctrine of eternal justification, understand it otherwise? You consider no one as justified until he believes: yet when he has believed he is not in an ungodly state, but the reverse.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH OPPOSED TO WORKS.

Extracts of a letter to the Editor, in 1801.

I THINK that Mr. M'Lean is in general a very good reasoner, but in his remarks on my Appendix to the Gospel worthy of all Acceptation, he does not appear to understand the subject. He would persuade his readers (which he would not do, were he not persuaded himself) that my views lead to *justification by works*; and this because I maintain faith, by which we are justified, to be a *holy* exercise. But I do not maintain that we are justified, in whole or in part, on account of the *holiness* of faith; but in respect of the righteousness of Christ only; or in other words, that God's pardoning and receiving us to favour is in reward, not of faith, or any holiness it contains, but of his Son's obedience unto death. This avowal, one should think, ought to free me from all suspicion of ascribing justification to works, in whole or in part, as it is impossible that any position can go farther towards renouncing that doctrine.

It is alleged however, that I ascribe justification to *that which is holy*, though not on account of its holiness. Be it so: Mr. M'Lean acknowledges that I have fully proved faith to be a *duty*. He must then ascribe justification to *that which is a duty*, though not on account of our exercising it *as* a duty: and wherein this differs from what I have advanced, is beyond my capacity to comprehend.

Mr. M'Lean says much on the *opposition* of faith and works in the scriptures, and substitutes my idea of faith for faith itself, in order to expose its absurdity. But his reasoning proceeds on the supposition, that those things which are opposite must need be so *in all respects*. It is

true, he does not say thus much. On the contrary, he says, "When two things are contrasted, or set in opposition to one another in the sacred writings, they are always either wholly, or in some leading respect, essentially different in their natures." Very well: and what I have written supposes faith and works to be essentially different, *as mediums of obtaining life.* The one receives justification as a reward, the other as a free gift to the unworthy, wholly out of regard to the righteousness of another; and this is that "leading respect," in which they stand opposed in the scriptures. But his reasoning proceeds on the supposition, that they must be different in *all* respects: for if in any respect they may be alike, why may it not be in their holy nature?

Aaron and Melchisedec are opposed in scripture, as much as faith and works; but it does not follow that they were not both of them men. *As a priest,* the latter was 'without father, and without mother;' but *as a man,* he and Aaron were born alike, and as all other men are. We might as well allege, from the opposition in this case, that Melchisedec could not be a man, as from that in the other, that faith cannot be of a holy nature; and it were as easy in the former instance as in the latter, by substituting the idea of humanity instead of Melchisedec, to render it an apparent absurdity. For example: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of'—one that was born of a woman, like other men—'without father, without mother, without descent,' born of a woman like other men! 'Now consider how great this man was'—born of a woman like other men!

Mr. M'Lean's reasoning goes to overthrow the *duty,* as well as the holiness of faith; and well indeed it may, since they are in substance the same thing. The adversaries of that truth allege that faith cannot be a duty, because it stands opposed to the works of the law. The latter, say they, are allowed on all hands to be duties; and if the former be the same, where is the opposition? Such is their reasoning, and such is that of Mr. M'Lean.

They might also substitute the idea of faith being a duty, for faith itself, and thereby hold it up to ridicule. For example: 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by'—that which is a duty! 'And that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by'—that which is a duty! 'That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through'—a duty! It was no difficult task to dress up our Saviour himself in a ludicrous habit, and then expose him to derision.

I had said, "though faith be a work (for so it is expressly called in John vi. 29) yet it does not justify *as* a work." But says Mr. M'Lean, "How can it justify *as* any thing than what it really is?" Is it then *nothing* but a work? It might be asked also with equal propriety, If faith be a duty, how can it justify any otherwise than *as* a duty? For how can it justify as any other thing than what it really is?

In short, while Mr. M'Lean allows faith to be a *duty*, he will never be able to prove that it is not a holy exercise of the heart; and all his attempts to show the inconsistency of free justification with the one, will be equally applicable to the other.

From the days of Glass and Sandeman to the present times, much has been said in favour of "simple belief;" and it is alleged, that if any holy exercise of heart were included in it, there ought to have been an "explanation of the term." But why do they not also descant on *simple un*belief; and allege, that if any unholy exercise of heart were included in it, there ought to have been an explanation of the term? While they allow unbelief to include an unholy exercise of the heart, and deny faith to include a holy one, an explanation of terms is much more necessary on their side, than on that which they oppose.

FAITH NOT A MERE INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE.

In Reply to some Remarks by Dr. Stuart of Edinburgh. 1803.

THE candour and ingenuity of your correspondent induce me, though the subject seemed to be concluded, to offer a brief reply. And if I understand his FIRST QUESTION, it amounts to this:—"Whether faith includes any thing *more* than an exercise of pure intellect or not, yet it will be allowed to include *something intellectual;* and is not that a duty? Surely faith *in all its parts* is the duty of every one."

I answer: The exercise of the intellectual faculty may be necessary to a holy exercise, and yet make no part of the holiness of it. We cannot perform any spiritual act, without the powers of humanity; but it is not *as human* that they are spiritual, or contain obedience to God. If, as the scriptures teach, '*love* be the fulfilling of the law, and all the law be fulfilled in one word, love;' all the various acts, whether corporeal or mental, which are the subject of commandment, can be no other than the diversified expressions of love. So much of love as there is in them, so much of obedience, and no more. Take away love from *fear*, whether of God or our parents, and you reduce it to a mere dread of displeasure as a natural evil, which has nothing holy in it; but may exist in all its force even in devils. Take away love from the exercise of *charity*, and it ceases to be obedience to God, or benevolence to man.

Even those exercises which have their more immediate seat in the intellectual faculty, as knowing and judging, have just so much of holiness or unholiness, and are just so much of the nature of obedience or disobedience, as they contain in them of love or aversion. Knowledge is

no farther an exercise of duty, nor ignorance of sin, than as the means of divine instruction are voluntarily used or neglected. The same may be said of judgment. If I decide, though it be in favour of truth, yet if it arise not from a candour of mind that is willing to receive it as the will of God, whatever be its bearings, there is no more *obedience* in it than in the just notions of the discreet scribe. Mark xii. 28. If on the contrary, I judge erroneously, it is no farther an exercise of *disobedience* than as I am warped by an evil bias of heart, which inclines me to reject or neglect the truth. Error, which proceeds not from these causes, is mere *mistake*, for which none is criminated, either by God or man. If David had been a conspirator against Saul, lying in wait for his life, as the latter suggested, and Ahimelech had erred in treating him as he did; yet 'knowing nothing of all this, less or more,' he ought to have been acquitted.

The same remarks apply to *faith* and *unbelief*. As to the latter, I suppose it will be allowed to be just so far a sin, and no farther than, as it arises from aversion to the truth, which leads men to reject or neglect it. Yet it may be said of this, as well as of faith, "Does Mr. F. hold the dissent of the understanding to be *any part* of unbelief? If so, surely unbelief *in all its parts* is a sin." But unbelief is not a sin, considered simply as an exercise of the intellectual faculty; or rather, that which is such, is not the unbelief of the scriptures, which is attributed to a corrupt state of the will, and from whence *alone* arises its sinfulness. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. And why should not the same be allowed of faith? If a mere dissent of the understanding be not the unbelief of the scriptures, a mere assent of the understanding cannot be the faith of the scriptures. So far as any thing is an exercise of pure intellect, uninfluenced by the disposition of the soul, it is merely natural; and duty is no more predicable of it than of the sight of the eye, or any other natural exercise. Nothing is duty any farther than as it is voluntary, or arise from the moral state of the mind. No duty

therefore can be performed by a depraved creature, but in consequence of regenerating grace.

This is a truth so clearly taught in the scriptures, that I wonder your correspondent should call it in question. Does he not know that 'the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and that therefore, 'they that are in the flesh cannot please God?' If this passage, as well as many others, do not teach us that no *obedience* is or can be yielded, while the sinner is 'in the flesh,' that is, in a state of unregeneracy—what does it teach? But if this be allowed, and faith admitted, as it is, to be an act of obedience to God, it must of necessity be preseded by regeneration: otherwise they that are in the flesh may please God.

If I have not strangely mistaken your correspondent, he admits of as much as this in his last paper. He admits the necessity of candour of heart, or of the mind being purged from prejudices by divine influence, *in order to believing*; and very properly places the *duty* of men in such an unprejudiced attention to divine truth. "The gospel, says he, proves its author, as the sun its creator; and we need only to attend, and to have the mind purged from prejudices, that we may possess complete conviction concerning both. This is the indispensible duty of all, though no man will perform it, but through divine influence." Again: "Though the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, but accounts them folly; yet a person under the influence of the Spirit of God, delivered from the blinding prejudices common to men, and attentive to the divine testimony, judges it to be true."

If these be really the fixed principles of your correspondent, and not merely a slip of the pen, we are agreed; and there needs no farther discussion on the subject.

As to the SECOND QUESTION, I do not know of any thing worth disputing between us. Whether *believing*

Christ, and believing *in* or *on* Christ, convey precisely the same idea or not, we are agreed that both are characteristic of real christianity, and have the promise of salvation.

Whether I be able to maintain what I suggested, that the former of these phrases ordinarily respects Christ as *a witness of the truth*, and the latter as being himself *the sum and substance of truth*, or not; I am not aware of any doctrine of the gospel, or any sentiment which either of us embraces, being affected by it. From a brief review of the passages referred to, I have but very little doubt of the phrase, believing *in* or *on* Christ, being ordinarily expressive of his being the Messiah, and *the only way of salvation*, that is, the sum and substance of truth, rather than *a witness of the truth*. It is true, he sustained both these characters; and accepting or rejecting him in either, involved a reception or rejection of him in both. But I wish to examine this matter more closely than I have hitherto been able to do, for want of leisure; not because I apprehend any consequences to hang upon it, but merely to come at the true meaning of scripture language.

THE ABUSE OF REVIEWS.

THE practice of reviewing the publications of the age as they appear, is a species of writing much adapted to a periodical work. It is acceptable to the generality of readers to see in a small compass what is going on in the literary and religious world; and even in works which are not wholly devoted to this object, it is agreeable to trace the leading principles of now and then a particular piece which attracts the public attention. But in these, as in all other Reviews, there is need of a much greater portion

of judgment and candour than many writers possess. If the editor, or principal managers of a work of this kind, indulge either a partial fondness for some men, or a censorious dislike of others, their review will become a mere vehicle of flattery or abuse.

These reflections have been occasioned by a friend putting into my hands the fourth volume of the New Theological Repository.* On looking it over, it appeared to me not a little tinctured with these faults; the latter more especially. A writer in the Biblical Magazine has already noticed one instance of their petulance, and brought home the charge to the confusion of the writer; and if you judge the following remarks upon the conduct of these gentlemen towards your friend Mr. Fuller,† admissible, they are much at your service.

On looking over the Index of the Theological Repository. I observed under the name of this writer, a long list of supposed errors laid to his charge. Now, thought I, surely Mr. Fuller has published some good things since this Magazine has made its appearance! But if the other volumes of the work resemble this, and this contains a fair account of him, he must be a very erroneous and dangerous writer: all he publishes is naught, and deserving of reprobation. It is true, they praise his former productions, written twelve or thirteen years ago; but even this seems rather from a design to give an edge to their present censures, than from any thing like a regard to what is good in them. Surely, said I, this is not the simple fruit of a regard to truth? Is it owing to some personal antipathy, which they may have conceived against him; or is a disposition to censure, the element in which they live?

* A periodical work published at Liverpool in 1802, by Mr. William Jones.

† Though for the purposes of concealment, the above piece was written throughout in the *third* person, the Editor has judged it expedient to retain the original form of the composition.

I observe there is a great deal of apparent coolness and self-possession in all their animadversions, but this is not always at the greatest remove from unchristian bitterness. Mr. Sandeman was very calm; yet he has been accused, and perhaps not without reason, of "gross misrepresentation, illiberal censure, and sarcastical contempt:"* and whether in this case the disciple be not as his master, they who are acquainted with the productions of both will easily determine.

As to the controversy with Mr. M'Lean, I cannot approve of the conduct of these by-standers, who, as if they doubted whether what their leader has advanced were sufficient, must need obtrude themselves as his coadjutors, and attempt to worry his opponent.

The lengthened list of errors imputed to Mr. Fuller by these gentlemen is little else than an index to Mr. M'Lean's pamphlet; a review, or rather an echo, of which is given in three succeeding numbers of the volume alluded to. It is marvellous what a bone of contention these writers make of that which the scriptures exhibit as the food of the faithful. They affect to consider faith as a very simple thing, needing no explanation; yet scarcely any writers have said so much to explain it, or made so much of their explanation. A mere review of a pamphlet on this subject, shall contain more matter than the original piece which gave occasion for it.

The writers in this work, I observe, have accused Mr. Fuller of error on three leading subjects; namely, Regeneration, Justification, and Particular Redemption. Permit me therefore to make a few remarks upon each of them.

1. Mr. F. is criminated for having pleaded for *regeneration being necessary to believing*. He contends, it seems, for "holy dispositions of heart previous to faith." Does he hold with any self-wrought goodness in the heart of a sinner? This will not be pretended. Does he plead that

* Booth's "Glad Tidings." Preface p. vii.

a man may sustain a holy character while an unbeliever? No. Does he plead for any other holiness of disposition, than what is essential to the very act of believing? He does not. Now his opponent, notwithstanding the triumphs of the party, has, if I am not greatly mistaken, conceded almost every thing that Mr. Fuller pleads for on this subject.

(1) He admits faith to be, not only *an act of the mind* but *a holy act.* But if so, unless a mind void of holy dispositions can perform a holy action, one would think it must be, after all, as Mr. F. has stated it.—(2) He acknowledges faith to be not only "good" or holy, but "an *effect* of the regenerating influence of the Spirit and word of God." But if this be allowed, where is the difference between them? Mr. F. would not object to the influence of *the word* in regeneration, provided it were granted him, that it was not by the word savingly believed; for it is regeneration *by faith* that he opposes. His words are, "All that I contend for is, that it is not by means of a spiritual perception, or belief of the gospel, that the heart is, for the first time, effectually influenced towards God." And if the above concession may be depended upon, as expressing the fixed sentiments of Mr. M'Lean, he does not contend that it is: for that which is the "effect" of regeneration, cannot, for this reason, be the *cause* or means of it.

2. Mr. F. stands accused of undermining the doctrine of *free justification*; for the fitness of faith to receive it is made, it seems, "to depend on its *moral excellency.*" Suppose it were said, it depends on its being *true, living faith?* This undoubtedly is all that Mr. F. intends; and one would think, this could not be denied him. In turning to the pages referred to, I find Mr. M'Lean labouring with all his might to prove, that his opponent pleads for such *a fitness* in faith, as that we are put into a state of justification as a suitable testimony of divine regard towards it. But surely this is up-hill work. How pitiable is the fate of a controversial writer! After disowning a

sentiment in almost every form of language, unless it be that of forswearing it, he is still accused of holding it. His words must be tortured and twisted into a thousand forms, to make them mean what he asserts they do not mean.

After all, Mr. M'Lean has some difference about him, though his Review has none. He "thinks" this must be Mr. Fuller's meaning. "If he is not greatly mistaken," it is so. Yet Mr. F. declares the contrary. He professes to be of one mind with Mr. M'Lean on this subject: but Mr. M. will not allow it. How is this? It has been observed, that the followers of Messrs. Glass and Sandeman have a singular talent for discerning a *self-righteous* spirit in all but themselves. A person in that connection once called upon a friend of mine, who was nearly of his sentiments as to christian doctrine; but happening unfortunately, to discover a partiality for Believers' Baptism, he was instantly condemned as a pharisee, and assured that he made a righteousness of it. Thus it is that Mr. M. has discovered the self-righteousness of Mr. F. He first insinuated something of this kind in some marginal notes of the second edition of his treatise on the Commission, and has ever since been labouring to make good his insinuations. If he fail in this, the whole of what he has written against Mr. F. upon justification must appear to the reader, as he himself justly observes, "a piece of insipid altercation."

But why does Mr. F. plead for the *moral excellency* of faith, as necessary to justification, if he do not make justification a reward conferred upon it as such? Why does Mr. M. and his party plead for *true* faith, in order to justification? An answer to this question will be an answer to the other. Why does Mr. M. admit the *holiness* of faith? By what he has last written, it should seem, he would not allow such a faith as is *not* holy, "a mere empty speculation," to be justifying. He must admit therefore that we are justified by *that which is* a holy exercise of the mind, and *that which is* a duty, though it is not *for the*

sake of any holiness in it, or duty performed by us.* And what does Mr. F. plead for more? Whether faith contain any holy affection or not, makes nothing as to the freeness of justification; because whatever holiness a creature may possess, short of 'continuing in all things written in the book of the law, to do them,' it is of *no account* in that important article. But if it were otherwise, while Mr. M. and his friends admit faith to be *a holy act* of the mind, though they will have it to be purely intellectual, the same consequence attaches to their notion, as to that which they oppose. Let the reader judge therefore, whether all they have alleged on this subject be any other than "a piece of insipid altercation."

3. The heaviest charge is yet behind. Mr. F. is not only erroneous, but self-condemned. He has abandoned his principles, it seems, on *particular redemption.* He has formerly written well on this subject, but of late has contradicted himself. "A new edition of his former excellent pamphlet," say these Editors, "is a desideratum." Mr. F.'s late error, it seems, consists in his placing the peculiarity of redemption, not in the degree of Christ's sufferings, or in any want of sufficiency as to the nature of the atonement, but merely *in the sovereignty of its application.* And this is an error of such magnitude, as ought to sink him in the esteem of religious people! "What, say they, will the Calvinists of the present day say to this view of the subject?" Many of those called Calvinists in the present day are not so. If the words of Calvin upon the very subject in question were printed by Mr. F. as his own, they would be sufficient in the account of great numbers of modern Calvinists to prove him an Arminian. And will the Editors of the Theological Repository stoop to appeal to popular religious opinion, which on other occasions they hold in such sovereign contempt? Ardent zeal, on certain occasions, is very condescending. It is said of Mr. M'Lean, that he lately advanced sentiments concerning original sin, and the obe-

* The reader may see this subject clearly and satisfactorily stated in President Edwards's Sermons on Justification, pp. 13—27.

dience of Christ, which are not commonly received among religious people, nor universally in his own connections. How is it that these gentlemen, who profess to "respect no man's person," do not hold *him* up to reproach; and ask, What will Calvinists of the present day say to this?

"That this is not the scripture doctrine, they add, we think has frequently been shown; but by no one more satisfactorily than by Mr. Fuller himself." Does Mr. F. then, in his former pamphlet, place the peculiarity of redemption upon different ground? With what face can these writers insinuate that he does? Had they quoted his own statement of the doctrine, the reader would have seen, that whether Mr. F. be right or wrong in his views, he set out on the same principle in that piece, which he maintains in his later publications. Let him speak for himself. "I suppose Philanthropos is not ignorant, that Calvinists in general have considered the particularity of redemption as consisting, not in *the degree* of Christ's sufferings, as though he must have suffered more, if more had finally been saved, or in any *insufficiency* that attended them; but in the sovereign *purpose and design* of the Father and the Son, whereby they were constituted or appointed, the price of their redemption; the objects of that redemption ascertained, and the ends to be answered by the whole transaction determined. They suppose the sufferings of Christ, in themselves considered, as of infinite value; sufficient to have saved all the world, and a thousand worlds, if it had pleased God to have constituted them the price of their redemption, and made them effectual to that end. These views of the subject accord with my own."

But it will be asked, does he not here represent Christ as dying in the character of a shepherd for his flock, a husband for his church, and a surety for his people? He does: but each of these particulars is adduced merely in proof of *a speciality of design* in the death of Christ, and not of the want of any sufficiency in the nature of the atonement itself. If they prove more than this, they prove more than the writer manifestly appears to have

intended. Every charge therefore of his having relinquished his sentiments, founded on those arguments, must be nugatory. All of them go to establish, that the number of the saved was wholly dependent on the *purpose* of the Father, and the *design* of the Son; and wherein this differs from "the peculiarity of redemption consisting in the sovereign application of the atonement," I am not able to perceive. Christ's dying as a shepherd for his sheep, a husband for his church, and a surety for his people, is the same thing in Mr. F.'s account as his dying with a *purpose* or *design*, that his death should be applied to their salvation, rather than others. It is manifest he then thought, as well as now, that the obedience and death of Christ, *in themselves considered*, were, like the sun in the heavens, necessary for an individual, but sufficient for a world; sufficient for all, but effectual only to the elect.

These gentlemen would persuade their readers, that upon Mr. F.'s present principles, Christ was equally wounded for the transgressions of Judas Iscariot, as for those of the apostle John. And if by this were meant no more than that his death was in itself equally *sufficient* for both, it certainly is the sentiment for which Mr. F. pleads, and that in his earlier as well as his later publications. But if it means that there was the same *design* towards both, this is not his sentiment; nor is it to be found in his later publications, any more than in his earlier ones.

A very unjust and unfriendly insinuation has been made by one of your correspondents, as though Mr. F.'s not having answered his opponent, Mr. M'Lean, arose from a consciousness of the badness of his cause.* That men whose prejudices lie on that side of the question should exult, and labour to provoke him to write, is no more than is common in such cases. But it is well known that Mr.

* Dr. Stuart had suggested, that "it would gratify some persons to know what effect Mr. M'Lean's Reply had produced on Mr. Fuller's mind, especially as it appeared that he had greatly misapprehended Mr. M.'s views." He also added, that "Mr. F. did not seem slow in answering, when he had a good opinion of his cause."

F. has in several controversies, suffered his antagonist to have the last word; and when he has thought proper to write, he has always been so slow in printing, that he has seldom answered any considerable work in the same year. From the time of Mr. M'Lean's pamphlet making its appearance, his hands have been so full of more important business, as scarcely to afford him the opportunity to read, much less to answer that performance.

Whether Mr. F. intends to make any reply, is best known to himself. I know however, that several of his friends have endeavoured to dissuade him from it.—(1) From an apprehension that such disquisitions, united with his other labours, may be injurious to his health.—(2) Because of the illiberality of his opponent, in having interspersed his performance with a number of insinuations, that Mr. F. had *knowingly* and *wilfully* misrepresented him. Such intimations become neither the christian nor the man: they tend also to divert the reader's attention from truth, and to interest it in what is merely personal. Were I disposed, I am sure that I could make out the charge of *wilful* misrepresentation against Mr. M. in as many instances and on as good grounds, as those which he has preferred against Mr. F.: But I would scorn the attempt. Whatever mis-statements either of them may have given of each others sentiments, and however difficult it may be to account for them on fair grounds, I am persuaded that neither the one nor the other is capable of doing it *knowingly* and *wilfully*; and a writer that will maintain the contrary, whatever be his talents, is unworthy of an answer.—(3) Because of the vast quantity of misconstrued and distorted meaning put upon his words, which will require to be set right; and which is a task not a little irksome both to the writer and the reader, and which few men who can better employ their time would wish to undertake.*

* It was not till seven or eight years afterwards, that Mr. Fuller produced his admirable *Strictures on Sandemanianism*, in reply to Mr. M'Lean. Ed.

REVIEW OF MR. SCOTT'S TREATISE ON FAITH.

The Warrant and Nature of Faith considered, with some References to the various Controversies on this subject. By the Rev. THOMAS SCOTT. 1799.

THE design of this treatise, if we rightly comprehend it, is to discuss various important points, advanced in Mr. Booth's "Glad Tidings to perishing sinners." We are happy in perceiving that both these respectable writers agree, as to the complete *warrant* which every sinner who hears the gospel has to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul, antecedent to all holy qualifications or dispositions whatever; a truth which leaves all unbelievers without excuse; which points out the way of peace to awakened sinners, and affords a plain direction to gospel ministers to invite their auditors, without distinction, to a participation of eternal life.

This important truth, though plentifully taught in the holy scriptures, and generally, if not universally, embraced by the reformers, puritans, and nonconformists, has been much opposed in the present century. Those writers who have laboured to set aside the gospel offer, as inconsistent with the doctrines of grace, have with it explained away the free invitations of the gospel, as they respect the unregenerate; considering them as addressed only to sinners made sensible of their sin, and thirsting after spiritual blessings; and contending that no other descriptions of men have any warrant to embrace them. This notion Mr. Booth has successfully combated, proving, beyond all just contradiction, that the invitations of the gospel are addressed to sinners *as sinners*.

There are several important particulars however, in which Mr. Booth and Mr. Scott disagree, and which are

well worthy the attention of those who wish for clear and accurate views of evangelical truth. Mr. Booth is partial to the term *warrant*, and seems to have studiously kept the idea of obligation out of sight. Mr. Scott, on the other hand, undertakes to prove that faith in Christ is the *duty* of all who hear the gospel, and observes, that no warrant seems to be required for obedience to a plain commandment. Considering faith however as implying an all-important benefit, he admits the propriety of the enquiry, What warrant a sinner has for expecting it from his offended God. In this view, he observes, "the term warrant signifies a ground of encouragement, authorising an application, and giving sufficient reason to expect success; insomuch that he who applies in the prescribed manner, cannot be rejected consistently with the truth of the holy scriptures." Such a ground of encouragement, Mr Scott allows to exist in the word of God, irrespective of all holy dispositions whatsoever.

But Mr. Booth not only denies the necessity of a change of heart to *warrant* our believing, but explodes the idea of its being necessary to the act of believing itself; or as he defines it, of relying on Christ for salvation; contending also that prior to his justification, the sinner performs no good act, but is an enemy to God. Mr. Scott takes the opposite ground, maintaining that no man ever believed in Christ while under the dominion of sin; that saving faith is the effect of regeneration, or the renewal of an unholy creature to a right spirit; and that those who 'work not, but believe in him who justifieth the ungodly,' are not persons who are inactive, but who "cease to work in respect of justification;" not enemies of God, but having transgressed his law, are rendered for ever incapable of being justified by any thing done by themselves; or in any other character than that of ungodly, to whom mercy is shown merely out of regard to the righteousness of him in whom they believe.

To establish these positions, Mr. Scott confines his attention to one leading point, which makes up the body

of his performance; namely, *that faith is not a mere act of the understanding, but a holy exercise of the heart.* Our author seems to have apprehended, that if this idea could be established, his work would be done, and to have reasoned on some such principles as the following.—If faith itself be a spiritual exercise, it must be the effect of regeneration; as no sinner, while an enemy to God, can be induced by any influence, human or divine, to perform that which is spiritually good. Farther: if faith be a holy exercise, and presede justification, the sinner when he is justified, though, being a transgressor of the law, he be in the account of the judge of all, 'ungodly,' yet is not actually at enmity with God; inasmuch as every degree of holy exercise must be inconsistent with such a state of mind.

In the discussion of this leading point—which after all we incline to think Mr. Booth does not deny, though he may have advanced things inconsistent with it—Mr. Scott goes over a great variety of topics, and examines various passages of scripture, which had been produced on the other side. The most forcible of his arguments appear to be the following.—Our Lord assures us, that no man can come to him, except he is taught of God, drawn of the Father, and has heard and learned of him. And has this teaching, drawing, hearing and learning, he enquires, nothing holy in its nature? Faith in Christ is not only the source of all the obedience which follows after it, but is itself *an act of obedience.* But all obedience is the expression of love, and is never performed by an unrenewed heart, not even by divine influence. Unbelief arises from an evil heart, which 'loveth darkness rather than light:' faith therefore, which is its opposite, arises from the love of light rather than darkness. As unbelief is attributed to voluntary blindness, so faith is ascribed to a holy illumination, to 'light shining into the heart,' which gives it a holy bias. Regeneration is assigned as the *reason* why some believed in Christ, while others received him not. Of their believing on his name, this is given as the cause;

'they *were* born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Faith in Christ is the *effect* and evidence of regeneration. 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.' That this is the sense of the passage is evident from similar phraseology being used of other effects and evidences of regeneration by the same writer, and in the same epistle. 'Every one that loveth is born of God—Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.' Repentance is constantly represented as previous to forgiveness, and consequently to justification, of which forgiveness is a branch; it is also generally mentioned as preseding faith in Christ, and in some instances as influential on it. 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Repent and believe the gospel. If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Ye repented not that ye might believe.'

Mr. Booth pleads that the word of God is the means of regeneration, and the seed or principle of spiritual life. Mr. Scott replies, not by denying either of these positions, but by suggesting that we cannot explain the *manner* in which God uses the word in regeneration, any more than that in which animals and vegetables are produced according to the course of nature. And though the word of God be the seed from whence the fruits of grace arise, yet must the ground be made good ere it will be received, so as to become productive.

Mr. Booth alleges the case of the Prodigal, as favouring his idea of there being nothing good in a man prior and in order to believing. Mr. Scott replies, "And did our Lord in this parable represent the returning sinner as driven merely by distress to seek deliverance from God? What did he then mean by the expression, 'when he came to himself?' Is it not evident, that from that time he possessed a right mind; and are not all his expressions those of sorrow and humiliation for sin, and of deep self-abasement?"

Mr. Booth suggests that the Publican, in the parable,

far from considering himself as possessing any holy disposition, appears as a criminal deserving of destruction; and who dare not lift up his eyes to heaven, even when he cried for mercy. Mr. Scott replies, "The question is not in what light the publican viewed himself, but whether there was nothing in his spirit intrinsically better than in that of the boasting Pharisee; and whether his self-abasing cry for mercy was not an exercise of true holiness? That it sprang from humility and contrition, and was not extorted by mere terror, the Lord himself testifies. 'I tell you that this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other; for every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' This testimony ought to be decisive."

Finally: Mr. Booth suggests, that if there be any holiness previous to justification, those characters in whom it is found may be justified, if not wholly, yet in part by their own righteousness. Mr. Scott replies, by alleging a principle in which we suppose all Calvinistic divines were agreed; namely, that no degree of good whatever in creatures, who have once broken the divine law, can in the least avail towards their justification; and that a renunciation of our own righteousness, imaginary or real, is of the essence of faith in Christ.

We have felt much interested in this serious discussion. The parties appear in some few instances to have mistaken each other's meaning, as is commonly the case more or less in controversial writings. On the one hand, the question is not whether a carnal heart will, *of its own accord,* believe in Christ, but whether it does so, *under divine influence,* without any predisposition of the will? On the other hand, the question in dispute is not concerning a *warrant,* but a *willingness* to believe; nor in what light it is necessary for a sinner to view himself in his application for mercy, but of what manner of spirit it is necessary for him to be, ere he will rightly apply? Neither do we perceive how regeneration by or without the word, can affect the question at issue between these writers, which

is, whether regeneration presede faith? If faith were understood as a belief of the word, and the mind were allowed to be passive in it, it possibly might: but if the belief of the word be not faith, but as Mr. Booth considers it, something "presupposed," the influence of the word upon the soul, whatever it is, and in whatever way, one should think must be the same. The mind is certainly active in its "reliance" on Christ for salvation, and such activity we think Mr. Booth will not assert to be the effort of an unregenerate heart.

We earnestly wish those who may have read one of these treatises to read the other, and any thinking serious mind will find himself amply repaid for the perusal.

REVIEW OF MR. BOOTH'S TREATISE ON FAITH.

Glad Tidings to perishing sinners; or the genuine Gospel a complete Warrant for the ungodly to believe in Jesus. By the Rev. ABRAHAM BOOTH. Second edition, improved.

We have already expressed our sentiments of this work, in reviewing Mr. Scott's "Warrant and Nature of faith," which was occasioned by it. In the present edition Mr. Booth has made some alterations, and some additions. We observe with pleasure, he has expressed himself with more caution, as to the nature of faith in Christ, than before. In the first edition, "a firm persuasion of his being the promised Messiah, and that the christian religion is from God," was excluded from the definition, and only considered as something "presupposed" in believing. But in this it is "a general persuasion" of these truths only, that is thus represented. This we consider as unexceptionable.

We wish Mr. Booth had been equally attentive in his revision of chap. iii. wherein the objections are answered. As to those persons who plead for any disposition of heart being necessary to *warrant* an application to Christ, whoever they are, we have nothing to say in their behalf. But those who, with Mr. Scott, consider regeneration as necessary, in the nature of things, to believing, whether they be right or wrong, appear to be rather unfairly treated. Far be it from us to accuse this truly respectable writer of wilful misrepresentation: we are persuaded he is incapable of it. But it is no uncommon thing for an author in the heat of controversy, to be insensibly warped from the line of a fair and impartial statement of the sentiments of his opponent.

"It is objected," says Mr. Booth, "though it be not necessary for a sinner to *know* that he is born again, before he believe in Jesus Christ; yet regeneration itself must presede faith; for the heart of a sinner being naturally in a state of enmity to the divine character, he will never turn to God, while in that situation, for pardon and acceptance." To this he answers, "Before this objection can justly be considered as valid, it must be evinced not only that regeneration presedes faith, but also that it is necessary to *authorise* a sinner's reliance on Jesus Christ." But why must this be first evinced? The objection, from whomsoever Mr. Booth took it, appears manifestly, not expressive of the sentiments defended by Mr. Scott; who, we are persuaded, detests the idea of any holy disposition *authorising* a sinner to come to Jesus. He contends however, that without it he never *will* come. A state of mind may be necessary, in the nature of things, to our coming to Christ, which is no part of the "warrant" for so doing. Mr. Booth himself admits a speculative change of mind, with a conviction of sin, to be so; yet as he elsewhere justly observes, "It is not under the notion of being deeply awakened in conscience, that sinners must first believe in Jesus, but as transgressors." Why then may not Mr. Scott, or those of his sentiments, be

allowed to argue in the same manner, with respect to the necessity of a change of heart? Why does Mr. Booth insist, that if it be necessary at all, it must be necessary for the purpose of *authorising* him to come? Finally: Why does Mr. Booth allege, that a persuasion of regeneration being necessary to believing, must lead the awakened sinner to "investigate the state of his own soul in search of it, with much the same solicitude as if he considered it as a warrant." All these allegations appear to be equally directed against what he allows, as what he opposes. If conviction of sin may be necessary to believing, without affording any warrant for it, so may regeneration; and if a persuasion of the necessity of regeneration to believing must needs turn the attention of a sinner into a wrong direction, such a persuasion respecting conviction of sin must have the same effect.

Again: "It has with confidence been demanded," says Mr. Booth, "whether, if sinners must not come to Christ as penitent, and as possessing a holy disposition, they are to believe in him as impenitent, and as under the reigning power of their depravity. But this, adds he, like some other objections, is not pertinent; for the question is, what is the proper warrant for a sinner to believe in Jesus." Now, so far as we are able to judge, the contrary of this is true. The question here was not, what is the proper warrant for a sinner to believe in Jesus, for that is not a matter of dispute; but *what is the state of his heart in the moment when he first believes.*—Mr. Booth's answer appears to be evasive. "A sinner must come, he says, neither as penitent nor as impenitent, but merely under the character of one that is guilty and perishing." The term *as*, in the objection, means the character which the sinner actually sustains; but in the answer, the character under which he is to view himself. It is thus, as we apprehend, that the objection is evaded. Mr. Booth would not say, that in coming to Christ, a sinner *is* neither penitent nor impenitent; yet to meet the objection, it is necessary he should say so; for the question is not,

under what character a sinner must view himself in coming to Christ; but what character, with regard to penitence or impenitence, does he actually sustain.

It is not our object to enter into Mr. Booth's reasonings, many of which we cordially approve; but barely to state in a leading instance or two, wherein we conceive he has not done justice to his opponents.

We shall only add a few remarks on the Note, which Mr. Booth has introduced in answer to a passage in our review of Mr. Scott's "Warrant and Nature of Faith." It was our design in that review to give, according to the best of our capacity, an impartial statement of the controversy. Mr. Booth however complains of a misapprehension of his meaning. He had said, "If sinners be reconciled to God and his law, previous to believing in Jesus, and to a view of revealed mercy, it should seem as if they had not much occasion either for faith, or grace, or Christ. Because it must be admitted, that persons of such piety are already accepted of God, bear his image, and are in the way to heaven." On this passage we remarked, 'Mr. Booth suggests, that if there be any holiness previous to justification, those characters in whom it is found may be justified, if not wholly, yet in part, by their own righteousness.' We have no objection to acknowledge, on a revision of the subject, that Mr. Booth's words did not warrant this construction; and that it had been better to have quoted them as they were, than to have put any construction upon them. We also acquit Mr. Booth of the obnoxious principle alluded to. But having said thus much, it requires to be added, that the above sentence, which stands the same in both editions, appears to be far from defensible.

First: It represents that which is pleaded for only as *an essential part* of a sinner's return to God, as though it were *a whole*, sufficient to denominate his character as a saint, and to prove his being accepted of God. It was necessary that the prodigal should 'come to himself,' justify his father's conduct, and condemn his own, before and in

order to his return: but the necessity of his return was not thereby superseded, nor was he accepted of his father until he did return. It is true, the father beheld him 'while a great way off,' and met the first movement of his heart towards him: but whatever were his kind designs, he was not accepted, according to the established laws of the house, till he had actually returned. It was not necessary, that while he thus justified his father's character, he should be ignorant of his readiness to forgive. Without a persuasion of this, however he might have reproached himself, he could have had no encouragement to return as a supplicant. Nor is it supposed that a sinner, in being brought to justify God as a lawgiver, must needs be ignorant of his being revealed as the God of grace: but the question is, whether in the order of things, it be possible for him to see or believe any grace in the gospel, beyond what he feels of the equity of the law? He may be persuaded of God's exercising what is called pardon; and knowing himself to be a sinner, exposed to wrath, he may be affected with it: but it cannot possibly appear to him to be a *gracious* pardon, any farther than as he feels reconciled to the justice of his claims as a lawgiver. To suppose it possible that we should believe the doctrine of grace, without being first made to feel the equity of the law, so as to justify God and condemn ourselves, is to suppose a contradiction. There is no grace but upon this supposition, and we cannot see that which is not to be seen. Whatever promises there may be to the least degree of holiness, if they respect the first movement of the heart towards Christ, it is under the consideration of its *issuing in faith in him,* without which no works of a sinful creature can be accepted; such promises therefore ought not to be brought for the purpose of superseding it. 'He that cometh to God must first believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Many promises also are made to believing: but if from hence we were to infer, that a man is sufficiently blessed in

believing, so as to render *coming* to God unnecessary, we should put a force upon the scriptures. Believing is supposed to have its immediate issue in coming, and therefore is treated in the scriptures as in effect the same thing. John vi. 35.

Secondly: It is supposed, that when once a sinner is accepted of God, he has but little occasion for either faith or grace, or Christ, in comparison of what he had before. "If after a person is reconciled to the divine character," says Mr. Booth, "he applies to Christ for justification, he cannot, consistently with his new state, believe in him as justifying *the ungodly,* nor consider himself as entirely worthless, and on a level with sinners in general." But (1) This supposes him not only to be renewed in the spirit of his mind, but to be *conscious* of it, which Mr. Booth's opponents do not contend for. (2) Supposing he were conscious of it, did not 'Abraham believe on him that justifieth the ungodly;' and that many years after his being a good man, and a believer; and did he not consider himself at that time as "entirely worthless, and as to acceptance with God, on a level with sinners in general?" (See Rom. iv. 3—5, compared with Gen. xv. 6. xii. 1—3. Heb. xi. 8.) We might add, does not every good man stand in the same need of faith, and grace, and Christ, with respect to justification, as at the first moment when he believed? And in all his approaches to God for this blessing, does he not consider himself as "entirely worthless, and upon a level with sinners in general?"

REVIEW OF MR. BOOTH'S SERMON:

"The Amen of social Prayer."

THE summary of prayer given by our Saviour to his disciples, stands unequalled for conciseness and comprehensiveness. Every petition, and almost every word in such a prayer, may be expected to contain an important meaning. That such a meaning is comprehended in the concluding term, and which forms in itself a perfect sentence, the judicious author of this sermon has fully evinced. Previous to his attempting this, however, he expresses his utter dislike of the practice of preaching from a single word, as a trial of skill, and offers what must appear to every candid reader a sufficient reason for his complying with the request of his brethren in this instance.*

Having stated the scriptural meaning of the term 'Amen,' he proceeds to consider various important truths, directions, encouragements, cautions, and reproofs, which are suggested by it. Particularly, That to close our prayers with a suitable Amen, they are required to be offered with *understanding:* for without knowing the revealed will of God, and our own unworthiness as sinners before him, believing in the alsufficient atonement and prevailing intercession of Christ, and depending on the aid of the Holy Spirit, we cannot hope for success in our petitions —With *fervour:* for if we be not in earnest in our prayers, our Amen loses its emphasis, and becomes a superficial formality, a mere word in course—Also with *expectation:* for the animating principle of our 'so be it,' arises from the grounds we have to believe that *so it shall be.* Our *obligation* to pray, is not from hence; but our

* This Sermon was one of a series of discourses on the Lord's Prayer, delivered at the Monthly Meeting in London, and published by desire of the Ministers who heard it.

encouragement is. We are not warranted to expect an answer to our prayers, at the time and in the manner we may prefer; but in God's time and manner we are. We have no ground to hope for success in prayer against the prevalence of our corruptions, unless we also watch against them: but so praying we have.

Farther: That the Amen of prayer suggests various reproofs and solemn cautions, both to those who lead, and those who unite in the worship. Particularly, *in him who leads,* or is the mouth of the assembly, it reproves all words which persons of the weakest capacity do not understand; all quaint expressions, or terms or phrases that are adapted to raise a smile, or which in any way savour of wit or contrivance; all ambiguous language, or words of doubtful meaning; all contending or arguing for or against a doctrine; and every thing like anger, envy or malignity, or which has a natural tendency to interfere with devout attention, deep solemnity, and the lively exercise of holy affections towards God: for to all or any of these things, how shall a serious assembly say, Amen?—*In those who silently unite* in this solemn duty, it cautions against, and severely reproves, every degree of negligence respecting their attendance at the place of prayer, before the devotional exercise begins; all wandering thoughts and inattention during the exercise; all unkind, unsociable, and immoral feelings towards one another; and all aversion of heart from the genuine meaning of the ascriptions, confessions, or petitions, which are presented: for with such frames and feelings, how can they with a good conscience say Amen?

The sermon concludes with a very solemn and interesting address to those who take the lead in prayer, those who unite in it, and those who pay little or no regard to it. On the whole, the writer of this Review feels thankful to God, and the worthy author, for having seen this highly interesting publication.*

* In a private note Mr. Fuller added, that he thought this Sermon one of the best that Mr. Booth or any other man ever delivered.

REVIEW OF THE MEMOIRS OF REV. JAMES GARIE.

It is good to read the lives of holy men; and the more holy they have been the better. Some readers, it is true, are not satisfied unless they discover in others the same low, grovelling, half-hearted kind of life, which they find in themselves. But satisfaction of this sort is better missed than found. It is good to be reproved, and stirred up to labour after greater degrees of spirituality, than any which we have hitherto attained.

It is good also to observe the difference between the accounts of the same person as communicated by a friend, and by himself. As given by the former, the character appears nearly faultless; as depicted by the latter, it abounds with imperfection. Whence this difference? We *know* more of ourselves, than any other person can know of us. What then will our lives be, when declared by Him who knoweth all things? Well might one of the greatest and best of men desire, that he might be *found in him!*

It is pleasant that in the same years, months and days, that we have been walking in the ways of God ourselves, others, whom we knew not, were travelling in the same direction, and with kindred sensations. What a society shall we find assembled, when we get home! We read the lives of eminently holy men in former times, and when we come to their decease, are ready to ask with a sigh, Are there any such men to be found in these days? God hath a reserved people however, in this as well as in every other age.

The characters of men are chiefly known by *trial.* It is not how we may feel and conduct ourselves in times when we have nothing in particular to affect us; but how we bear the temptations and afflictions, the smiles and the frowns, the evil reports and the good reports of the world,

that determines what we are. Mr. GARIE had his share of these trials. Doubtless there are men who have passed through greater: but his were sufficient to furnish proof of his being not only a true christian; but an eminent servant of Jesus Christ. In his removals from place to place, he appears to have kept his eye on one object, and in patience to have possessed his soul.*

While however we admire his piety, meekness and patience, it becomes us to learn instruction from the things which befel him. In his first removal we see the danger of congregational churches submitting to the influence and direction of a few opulent individuals (whose desire it frequently is to obtain a minister who shall deal gently with their vices) till, lightly esteeming their greatest mercies, they are justly deprived of them.

In determining on the question of joining the established church, we find him frankly avowing the influence of early spiritual advantages which he had there received, of the amiable and dear friends he had in it, and of what he accounted the leadings of providence. But no mention is made of his enquiring into *the revealed will of Christ* upon the subject; nor any intimation given, that, after having examined the scriptures, he was convinced that a national establishment was the most consistent with them.

* Mr. Garie was one of the ministers who, in the year 1790, attempted to disseminate the gospel in some parts of Ireland. After preaching several months at Sligo, with every appearance of success, the new place of worship was rudely attacked, and the windows demolished, the day after it had been opened by Mr. Garie. A second attack followed, and also a third, until the meetinghouse was burned down, and a dreadful outrage committed on one of his principal friends. Mr. Garie still continued at his post, though in imminent danger of his life, and was obliged to change his lodgings every night. A man entered his room one evening, with a pistol in his hand, threatening his life. Mr. Garie advanced towards him, holding up a small bible; and with a smiling countenance, looked his rude visitor full in the face. Struck with his mild and innocent appearance, the man immediately retired from him, and his life was preserved. Mr. Garie afterwards returned to Scotland, where he encountered various difficulties, but was finally settled at Perth, and died in 1802. ED.

In the repulses he met with, we cannot but perceive the lamentable evils which arise from the church being so connected with the world, as that the best interests of a christian congregation shall be decided by the prejudices and intrigues of men, who care not for its spiritual welfare, and the greater part of whom may be strangers to true religion.

We are glad to find that Mr. Garie's family, like that of Mr. PEARCE'S, has been thought worthy of the patronage of the religious public. It speaks well for our times, that the families of men who have been eminent in disinterested labours for God, are provided for by his people. The spirit discovered in Mr. Garie's diary will both reprove, and provoke to emulation, those who are in any degree likeminded; and may convince others, that religion is not a cunningly devised fable, but a solemn reality.

REVIEW OF MR. BEVANS'S DEFENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

THE religious denomination usually stiled Quakers, which had, for ages, like Issachar, been quietly dwelling in their tents, became considerably agitated at the commencement of the present century, in consequence of an American female preacher, Hannah Barnard, having disseminated Socinian principles in this country, and maintained that they were the doctrines of the primitive Quakers. An animated controversy ensued, and there were not wanting some who advocated the cause of the heretical stranger. Mr. Bevans, then in connection with this society, and since the Author of a learned and elaborate Enquiry into the Genuineness of the two first chapters of Matthew's Gospel, against the exceptions of Dr. Carpen-

ter and other Socinian writers—a work which has been liberally patronised by some of the Principals of the university of Oxford—took a leading part in the present controversy, and wrote an able "Defence of the Christian Doctrines of the Society of Friends, against the charge of Socinianism." Having explored the writings of the original founders of his denomination, he saw sufficient reason to believe that their sentiments, in reference to the points in dispute, were on the side of orthodoxy, though accompanied with some ambiguous expressions which were liable to objection.

To this Defence were added, some strictures on Mr. Evans's "Sketch of the different Denominations," showing that this writer, who had intermeddled in the dispute, had not only grossly misrepresented the Quakers, in spite of all remonstrance, but that "his whole performance was evidently devoted to the cause of the Socinians and Universalists."

Mr. Bevans became the personal friend of Mr. Fuller, and when he undertook to republish "Hannah Adams's View of Religions," to which he prefixed his incomparable Essay on Truth, Mr. Bevans furnished a valuable article for the work, under the title of "Friends," containing a correct detail of their leading sentiments. Afterwards, when Mr. Bevans published his "Defence," as stated at the head of this paper, Mr. Fuller wrote a Review of it for one of the monthly journals, which cost him, as he acknowledged, considerable labour, and furnishes one of the finest specimens of his candour and liberality, while it abounds with the usual acumen and fidelity of the writer. The introductory part of it, relating merely to the circumstances in which the controversy originated, is comprised in the above statement, in order to make room for the following judicious observations on the doctrine of atonement, the inspiration of the scriptures, and the nature of divine teaching, which are the leading points of this interesting article. ED.

Concerning the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, Penn and Claridge profess to reject what they term "the vulgar doctrine of Satisfaction;" and our author allows them to have disowned "vicarious atonement," and "the appeasing of vindictive wrath." We should be sorry to affix ideas to terms which were not in the mind of the writer; but if we understand them, atonement is reparation made to the injured authority of the divine law. "Vicarious atonement" is for that reparation to be made by a substitute, who endures the curse of the law in the sinner's stead; and "the appeasing of vindictive wrath," is not the changing of God's mind from hatred to love; but having expressed his displeasure against sin, in the death of his Son, justice is satisfied, and he can now consistently display his compassion to sinners for Christ's sake.

We do not think it was the intention of these writers to favour the Socinian doctrine; but in opposing the crude notion of Christ's having so paid the debt, as to lay the Governor of the world under a natural obligation to discharge the debtor, and that immediately, or without the intervention of repentance and faith, we cannot but observe that they have made very near advances to it. We earnestly entreat our author and his connections to reconsider this subject, and carefully to examine whether they may not renounce this notion, without giving up our Saviour's "vicarious atonement," or his having endured the curse of God's righteous law in the sinner's stead. Were we to abandon this idea, we could affix no meaning to a great part of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; nor should we feel any solid ground on which to rest our everlasting hopes.

In chap. v. and vi. our author proceeds to examine the sentiments of the early Friends, concerning the Scriptures. Penn, Barclay, and others, certainly were not Socinians on this subject, any more than on the foregoing ones; but they wrote much to prove that the scriptures were not the only, nor the primary rule of faith and man-

ners; for this honour they ascribe to the Spirit as dwelling in man. This position, though wide of Socinianism, yet led them to write in a manner very capable of being turned by an ingenious Socinian to the advantage of his cause.

It is with pleasure we find the early Friends acknowledging the scriptures to have been written by divine inspiration, and to be the words of God; and also that "whatever doctrine or practice, though under pretensions to the immediate dictates and teachings of the Spirit, is contrary to them, ought to be rejected as false and erroneous." But we do not perceive the consistency between this and their denying them to be the principal rule of faith and manners; that is, the principal rule by which the other is to be judged of. Ought we to try the truth of the scriptures then, by their agreement with what we suppose to be the dictates and teachings of the Spirit within us? Or the truth of these supposed dictates and teachings, by their agreement with the scriptures? The above concession appears to be in favour of the latter, and so to decide the question.

We readily admit that the Spirit of God is greater than the scriptures, as God is greater than the greatest of his works; and that by his renewing influence the mind is taught to know, what it would never form just conceptions of without it. This we consider as that anointing, of which the apostle speaks; by which believers are said to 'know all things.' But we do not perceive the propriety of calling this "a rule of faith and manners." The extraordinary revelations of the Spirit, such as those of David, concerning his pursuit of the Amalekites; and to Paul, respecting his going into Bithynia,—were indeed a rule to them, as much as a written revelation is to us. But it is very unsafe to reason from them to the ordinary teachings of the Holy Spirit, since the 'sealing up of the vision and prophecy.' The one was a revelation of new truths to the mind: the other enables us to discern the glory of that which is already revealed. The former sup-

plied the want of a perfect rule, while the sacred writings were incomplete: the latter teaches us how to walk by it, now that it is completed. The teaching of the Holy Spirit, we conceive, is that which forms us by the rule, rather than the rule itself.

It has been said by Antinomians, that it is not the moral law, but the Holy Spirit in their hearts, which is a rule to them. Our answer has been, You confound the rule of a holy life with the cause of it. Whatever is a rule to us must be known, or knowable by us; but the Holy Spirit in the heart is a secret spring, of which we can know nothing, but by its effects. It is the source of all spiritual judgment and action; but the rule by which we are to judge and act, is God's revealed will. Whether this answer be just; and if it be, whether it does not apply alike to both cases,—we hope will be seriously and candidly considered.

With respect to the question between our author and his opponent, we have no hesitation in saying, That the early Friends would neither have approved nor endured the opinions of Hannah Barnard. It is true, they each set up a rule superior to the scriptures; but that of the one is the reason of the individual; the other, the teachings of the Spirit. By the rule of Hannah Barnard, many parts of the present canon of scripture are rejected as untrue; by theirs, the whole is admitted to be authentic. She rejects the account of the miraculous conception, of the miracles, and of the resurrection of Christ. But Barclay considers it as "damnable unbelief, not to believe all those things to have been certainly transacted, which are recorded in the holy scriptures concerning them."

The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters contain a Review of the Charges exhibited against Hannah Barnard, with her Answers, &c. The former appear to be worded with great caution, and proved beyond all just contradiction. By her answers, in several instances, she departs from christian ground, and ought to rank as a Deist. The partiality discovered for her cause by Mr.

Evans, in his "Sketch of the Denominations," adds another to the numerous proofs which have gone before, that Socinianism feels a sympathy (as of one that is near akin) with Infidelity.

The sentiments of the Friends on the unlawfulness of war, under the christian dispensation, are well known. Hannah Bàrnard has advanced a step farther, maintaining that war is in itself wrong; and consequently that the wars of the jews with the seven nations of Canaan, could not have been made with the divine approbation. Were we to judge of the sentiments of the Friends by those of Anthony Benezet, who considers war as having been suffered rather than approved under the old testament, in like manner as men were 'suffered to put away their wives;' we must acknowledge that we could not perceive their consistency with the commandments of God to Israel to make war on the Canaanites, and his displeasure against those who refused. But as he is not one of the early Friends, and what he has written is considered as only his private opinion; the sentiments of the Society, on this subject, are to be sought elsewhere.

Their disapprobation of all war appears to be confined to the christian dispensation, and to be founded on such passages as Matt. v. 38, 39. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.' The law, they suppose, warranted a retaliation of injuries; but that the gospel requires forbearance and forgiveness. We do not think it was the design of our Lord, in this passage, to oppose the genius of the gospel dispensation to that of the law, but to rectify the abuses which had been made of the latter by the false glosses of the jews, who perverted the lawful punishments of the magistrate, as allowed in Exod. xxi. 24, to the purposes of revenge and private retaliation. But whatever we may think of this, and of the lawfulness of resisting unjust aggression, or threatened invasion, we see nothing in the principle, as maintained by the Friends, that reflects on the justice of the wars of

Israel, which they consider as founded on divine authority.

Upon the whole, though we differ from the Friends in many important particulars, and have, we hope, with christion candour, stated our objections to some of them; yet there are many things in this work which afford us pleasure. It is gratifying to see so unanimous and decided a stand made against the spirit of Infidelity, under the form of Unitarianism; and to find it conducted with so much calmness and justice. Such cases as those of Hannah Barnard are permitted to try, not only individuals, but societies. It is pleasant also to observe in our author, a familiar acquaintance with the writings of others, besides those of his own denomination. We cannot but from hence entertain a hope, that he, and the Friends in general who may give the foregoing remarks a perusal, will take them in good part, and candidly consider the force of them. It is from such a mutual interchange of sentiments between different denominations, who have been in different habits of thinking, that each is likely to derive advantage. In this way we may be candid, charitable, and liberal, without becoming indifferent to religious principles.

The work itself is elaborate, and fraught with information on the subjects it embraces. It contains much close thinking and conclusive reasoning. We will only add, that though it is natural and proper for a society to vindicate the principles of its first founders, when they are misrepresented; yet in pursuing this object, there is danger of considering their opinions as oracular. "The first of considerations," as this writer allows, "is not who has believed,—but what is the truth?"

REVIEW OF THE REV. CHARLES JERRAM'S LETTERS ON THE ATONEMENT.

THE many able productions which have appeared in defence of this important doctrine, might seem to render all future vindications of it unnecessary. But while its adversaries write, and labour to exhibit it in a false and exceptionable point of light, its friends must write also, though it be only to restate its evidence, and to correct their misrepresentations.

By the advertisements at the end of these Letters, we learn who was the author of the excellent "Letters to a Universalist," hitherto known by the name of SCRUTATOR. The occasion of both these pieces appears to be nearly the same. The Universalists in the neighbourhood of Mr. Jerram having been very assiduous, it seems, in propagating their principles, he has felt it his duty to vindicate the doctrines which they have attempted to discredit.

But how is this? Do Universalists disown the atonement? It is well known that the adversaries of the atonement have long been friendly to universalism; and Mr. Vidler was warned, at the outset of his career, "to beware of the whirlpool of Socinianism: but is it so, that they have actually formed a junction? The writer opposed in these Letters does not *profess* to reject the doctrine of atonement, but to give a new *explanation* of it. Such, we recollect, was the object of a pamphlet published not long since by a Mr. John Simpson of Hackney, entitled "Plain thoughts on the new-testament doctrine of Atonement;" and the explanation given by him amounted to this, namely, The reconciliation of the mind to God, or conversion!

But wherein is the difference between the scheme of these writers, and that of Socinians in general? According to Mr. Simpson, it lies in this: many of the latter, with

Dr. Taylor, make atonement to consist in the reconciliation of our heathen ancestors to christianity, to the superseding of personal conversion in their descendants; and this, he thinks, renders it almost, if not altogether, a nullity. To this we take the liberty of adding, Socinians in general renounce not only the doctrine, but the word *atonement*, which they are very well aware conveys the idea of *satisfaction*. But Mr. Simpson, and the Universalists, though they agree with their brethren in rejecting the *doctrine*, yet seem to think it best to retain the *word*, and to put their own sense upon it.

Mr. Jerram considers this merely a piece of artifice. "Under pretence of being advocates for the atonement, he says, they have attempted to undermine it, renouncing the doctrine while they retain the name. They have chosen to call this doctrine, as it has for ages been understood by all denominations of christians, any thing but *the atonement*; and have appropriated the name to a set of notions which bear no more resemblance to the ideas which it has hitherto been accustomed to designate, than the writings of Socinus to the epistles of St. Paul. This artifice has so far succeeded, as sometimes to prevent the alarm which a naked statement of their real sentiments would have occasioned. Persons, who have always been taught to consider the atonement of Christ as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, might have been startled at an avowed opposition to it: but by retaining the name, though the thing be given up, the change they are persuaded to make, appears less formidable. And when such sentiments have been addressed to minds of a speculative turn, and who have never been well grounded in the principles they profess to believe, they have seldom been without effect. At first, they were *not disposed to contend for trifles*, so long as they conceived the principal doctrine remained unimpeached; and feeling desirous of being ranked among "the candid and liberal enquirers after truth," they next *lent a favourable ear* to every thing that presented itself under the mask of improvement. To

this succeeded a number of flattering compliments addressed to their vanity—and now the work is done. They presently discover the absurdity of their former opinions, and look down with pity or contempt on those who still hug the chains of prejudice, and creep on in the obsolete path of their forefathers. They commence the zealous disciples of Socinus—the "rational" worshippers of the *all-benevolent* Deity—and all this without relinquishing an iota of the doctrine of the atonement!"

The work before us contains four Letters, which Mr. Jerram has addressed to his opponent. In the first, he states the question at issue. Declining all contention about the term *satisfaction*, he endeavours to ascertain the thing which he means to defend. "I collect, says he, from your letter, that you mean to set aside every other consideration in the pardoning of sin, but the mercy and love of God; you oppose every thing *vicarious* in the nature of Christ's death, every idea of making an atonement to divine justice, or of Christ's suffering any thing in the place of sinners." This doctrine Mr. Jerram maintains; and proceeds to answer no less than sixteen objections, which his opponent had raised against it. In the second letter, he endeavours to establish the doctrine from the general current of scripture; in the third, from the nature of the jewish sacrifices and priesthood; and in the fourth, from the fitness of things.

At the close are several valuable notes, taken principally from the elaborate and masterly work of Dr. Magee, on the same subject. In the last of these notes Mr. Jerram has taken occasion to vindicate his friend, Mr. Fuller, from a very unfair statement given by Mr. John Evans, in his "Sketch of the different Denominations;" in which Mr. Fuller's views on this important doctrine are ranked with those of Arians and Sabellians. It would seem as if these writers, like the hero across the channel, were very much in want of help, or they would not wish to press those into an alliance with them who are known to be averse to their system.

If the reader has seen the "Letters to a Universalist," before referred to, he will observe that the present are less diffuse; and what may appear not a little surprising, are written in a very gentle and argumentative strain, and without any reference to the learned languages. The sarcastic "Scrutator" is here the calm, dispassionate, but decided advocate for what appears to him a fundamental doctrine of christianity. To account for the difference, we must have recourse to the preface to his former pamphlet. "He was not ignorant," as he then observed, "that when a man sits down to debate a point with another, he should avoid every appearance of personality; and as far as possible, whatever might even indirectly hurt the feelings of his opponent. The investigation of truth is the only object at which he should aim. But the office of a reviewer is widely different. It is his province to hold up the disputants to the view of the world; to praise what is commendable, and to correct what deserves censure. It belongs to him to point out the perspicuity, strength, and conclusiveness of an argument, as well as the candour and ingenuousness with which it is conducted: nor is it less his duty, however painful, to expose the petulance of little minds, the arrogance of the sciolist, the unsupported claims to candour of the illiberal, and to wrest the palm of victory from the hand of the vanquished."

REVIEW OF STRICT AND MIXED COMMUNION.

THE Rev. JOHN CARTER, pastor of the Independent church at Mattishall in Norfolk, after having published several pamphlets in defence of pædobaptism, wrote a small treatise, entitled "Thoughts on Baptism and Mixed

Communion, in three letters to a friend; in which some Animadversions are made on the Rev. Abraham Booth's Apology." Mr. Fuller being requested to write a Review of the article, communicated to the Editor the following strictures, which were never published.

The "Pædobaptist" addresses his letters to a Baptist. The first gives the author's reasons for his own practice. The two last are in favour of a mixed communion, between baptists and pædobaptists at the Lord's table. We pass over that part of his piece which relates merely to baptism, with only observing, that the author in pleading for sprinkling is not so convinced of it as to think his own side "exclusively right." In the second and third letters, where he pleads for mixed communion, it is observable too, that he admits the principle of the strict baptists; namely, *that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to fellowship at the Lord's table.* But he thinks that each may acknowledge the validity of the other's baptism, and endeavours to persuade his correspondent that he ought not, unless he could establish his claim to infallibility, to consider himself as *exclusively* right; that is, he would have him allow, that those who have been sprinkled in infancy, are baptised, though it may be in his judgment, not in so scriptural a manner as himself. He censures Mr. Booth with some severity for assuming in his Apology, that pædobaptists are *unbaptised*, and that their thinking themselves otherwise is a *false persuasion.* Finally, he disclaims any dominion over the faith of the baptists, and thinks the baptists ought to claim none over his.

To the above reasoning we suppose a strict baptist, it may be his correspondent, would answer nearly as follows——I feel obliged to you, dear sir, for your kindly inviting me and my brethren to unite with you in commemorating the death of our common Lord. I give you full credit for the brotherly affection by which you are

influenced, and should be happy if this wall of separation could be removed, without our dispensing with an ordinance of Christ. As the ground of our union, you propose to me a principle, which, if it could be admitted, would, I acknowledge, accomplish the end. But do you not perceive that, in admitting it, I must relinquish not merely my practice of strict communion, but my principles as *a baptist*; or if you please, as *an antipædobaptist*; and either refuse to baptise any in future who have been sprinkled in their infancy, which the far greater part have been; or when I do so, be guilty of *re*baptising them, and thus become in reality, what I have hitherto disowned with abhorrence, an *ana*baptist.

In your last letter, you say, "It is certainly just and right, that each should act upon his own principles." And no doubt, if a union were accomplished, it must proceed on this ground. But your second and third letters require us to relinquish what is essential to our being *antipædobaptists*, and insist, as I just now said, on our either giving up the practice of baptising those who have been sprinkled in their infancy, or becoming avowed anabaptists. If indeed our principles as antipædobaptists be unscriptural, they ought to be relinquished: but I do not perceive, from any thing you have advanced, that they are so: and in pleading for mixed communion, it is not your professed object to prove them so.

I make no pretense to being *infallibly* right; neither do you, I dare say, in any of your religious sentiments: yet there are many things in which you certainly consider yourself, and those of your mind, as *exclusively* so. In the same light I consider my views of baptism. You express astonishment and offence at Mr. Booth's saying that, *in our judgment*, you are unbaptised. But I am no less astonished, that you who have known so much of us should yet have to learn, that it is not possible for a baptist to consider you in any other light. The moment he does so, he ceases to be a baptist. Yes, sir, in *our* judgment, you are unbaptised; and our judgment must

decide our practice. You have doubtless a right to judge for yourselves, and far be it from us to wish to deprive you of any part of that inalienable privilege: but in a question of communion, in every thing necessary to it, *which you allow baptism to be,* our judgment and yours must coincide.

If Mr. Booth had been reasoning with *you,* he would not have taken it for granted that you were baptised. But when reasoning with the *baptists,* he had a right to do so; nor is there any cause for you to be offended at it. There would be an end of argumentation, if what is allowed on both sides of a controversy to be false, may not be called so.

Admitting the validity of our baptism, you are willing to receive us to communion: while we cannot admit the validity of yours, and so cannot consent to commune with you. This you seem to think hard, and consider our conduct as claiming dominion over your faith. But on what ground is it that you admit the validity of our baptism? Is it merely because *we think* ourselves baptised? No: we are baptised in *your judgment,* as well as in our own. In receiving us therefore, you are not obliged to act contrary to your principles. But the case is otherwise with us. We verily believe you to be unbaptised, not merely as being only sprinkled, but as receiving it at a time when you could not actively 'put on Christ,' which 'as many as were baptised' in primitive ages did. Gal. iii. 27. In receiving you therefore, we must of necessity act contrary to our principles, by uniting with those at the Lord's table whom we believe to be unbaptised. The result is,—the dispute between us on mixed communion is at an end. If we err, it is as baptists, by considering infant baptism as invalid.

You have no hope it seems of our ever coming together, unless we could allow your baptism to be valid; that is, unless we could retract the principles of antipædobaptism. There is one other way left however, and that is, by your retracting those of pædobaptism; and why should we not hope for the one, as well as you for the other?

The controversy on strict and mixed communion, in respect of baptism, is reducible to three questions.——(1) *Is baptism necessary to communion at the Lord's table?*—(2) *Is a being immersed on a profession of faith necessary to baptism?*—(3) *On whom does the duty of judging what is baptism, devolve? On the party baptised, or on the church, or on both?*

The *first* was denied by John Bunyan; but being generally admitted by pædobaptists, they are not entitled to his arguments. Those who follow Bunyan are chiefly baptists, who admit of mixed communion; and Bunyan himself was of this denomination. Against these, Mr. Booth's Apology is chiefly directed.

The denial of the *second*, is ground proper for pædobaptists. But if they make it good against the baptists, they convict them of error as *baptists*, rather than as *strict* baptists.

Of the *third*, much has been said by the friends of mixed communion, both among baptists and pædobaptists. None, we apprehend, will plead for a church being the judge of what is baptism, to the exclusion of the candidate. The question is therefore reduced to this: Is it for the candidate exclusively to judge what is baptism; or is it necessary that his judgment and that of the church should coincide upon the subject?

If baptism be *not* necessary to communion; or though it be, yet if immersion on a profession of faith be *not* necessary to baptism; or though it be, yet if the candidate for communion be the *only* party with whom it rests to judge what is baptism; then *the strict communion of the baptists seems to be wrong.*

But if baptism *be* necessary to church communion, and immersion on a profession of faith *be* necessary to baptism; and it *be* the duty of a church to judge of this, as well as of every other prerequisite in its candidates; then *the strict communion of the baptists seems to be right.*

STRICT COMMUNION IN THE MISSION CHURCH AT SERAMPORE.

Letter to the Editor of the Instructor, Jan. 28th 1814.

I BY no means wish to obtrude myself on you or your readers; but the letter which you inserted in your paper of the 19th instant, of "A Pædobaptist," calls upon me for an answer.

It is true, that the Baptist Missionaries at Serampore do practise Strict Communion. It is also true, that they did so from the beginning, till within the last three or four years, when they agreed to admit of Open Communion. After this the question was resumed and discussed. The result was, that they determined to return to their original practice. As to any *injunction*, I know of none. Most of our churches in England practise strict communion, but do not "enjoin" it upon other churches; and I suppose it is the same with the church at Serampore and Calcutta. They may recommend whatever they think right, without enjoining it.

I can easily conceive that these changes would cause some feelings among Baptists differently minded on the subject, but cannot conceive why our Pædobaptist brethren should take offence at it. Those baptists who practise open communion, do not mean to acknowledge the validity of pædobaptism. Had they rather then be admissible into our churches, as unbaptised in the account of their brethren, than not at all? If so, to be sure we ought to feel obliged by their good opinion of us; as after all that they have said and written and done against us, they cannot really think ill of us.

But is it true, that our pædobaptist brethren seriously wish us to practise open communion? I give them the fullest credit for desiring *as christians* to be in fellowship

with us, and with all other christians; and this also is our desire, as much as it is theirs. But *as pædobaptists*, do they wish us to admit them to communion, *without acknowledging the validity of their baptism?* This is the question; and from all that I have read of their writings on the subject, however they may complain of strict communion, they cannot answer in the affirmative.

Dr. Worcester, in his friendly letter to Dr. Baldwin, though he pleads for a free communion between baptists and pædobaptists, and avows it to be the object of his pamphlet, yet allows that, "if professed believers are the only proper subjects for baptism, and if immersion be not a mere circumstance or mode of baptism, but essential to the ordinance, so that he who is not immersed is not baptised, the sentiment of strict communion would be sufficiently established." Now Dr. Worcester's premises are our most decided principles, and this whether we practise strict or open communion. He therefore admits our practice to be sufficiently established, and has only to complain of us for not allowing the validity of their baptism; that is, for being baptists.

The same is manifest from a review of Mr. Booth's Apology, in the Evangelical Magazine. The reviewer makes nothing of free communion, *unless it were on the principle of admitting the validity of pædobaptism.* Those baptists who practise it, he leaves to defend themselves as they can. The result is, that the real objection against us respects us not as strict nor as open communionists, but as baptists. In other words, that the only open communion that would give satisfaction must include an acknowledgment of the validity of pædobaptism, which for any baptist to make, would be ceasing to be a baptist.

REMARKS ON INFANT BAPTISM AND INFANT COMMUNION.

In Reply to some papers, written by the Rev. S. NEWTON *of Norwich.*

THE piece by "An Old Congregationalist," seems to invite an answer from both baptists and pædobaptists. If the following remarks be acceptable on behalf of the former, they are at your service.

Whether I can convince your respectable correspondent, (with whom, if I am not mistaken, I have some acquaintance) or not, I hope he will allow what I advance to be "friendly," and as free from "the air of angry controversy" as he can desire.

That the plea for infant communion is equally valid with that of infant baptism, you will not expect me to dispute. If I could be convinced of the one, I see no reason why I should scruple the other. If one of your pædobaptist correspondents should think proper to answer in behalf of his brethren, it will belong to him to point out the grounds for admitting the former, while he rejects the latter. My share of the answer is merely to notice the arguments for infant communion taken from the scriptures, or from other acknowledged duties.

We are accused at the outset, of having, "without a divine precept, separated the children of believers from the church of God." To this I answer—(1) Allowing them to have been *in the church* under the old testament, it does not follow that they should be members of churches under the new testament. "A Congregationalist" must admit of a very material difference in the constitution of the church under these different dispensations; so material as that the laws of admission to the one are no rule by which to judge of the other. If he will not however, he must consider as members of the church, not only his

own children, but all that are 'born in his house, or bought with his money.' Or if he refuse this consequence, he brings upon himself his own charge, of separating the poor servants from the church of God, without a divine precept. Should he in this case allege, that there is no precept or example in the new testament for admitting them, he would furnish an answer which is no less applicable to the other.—(2) But before the charge of separating the children of believers from the church of God had been preferred, it should have been *proved* that they, *as such, were ever in it.* Unless the whole Israelitish nation were believers, it could not be *as* the children of believers that their descendants were admitted to divine ordinances. If "the habits and practices of the jews" prove any thing, they will prove too much, at least for "A Congregationalist." They will not only require the admission of servants born in the house, or bought with money, but the very constitution of the church must be national. Their children and servants must not only be admitted in infancy, but continue in full communion when adults, though there should be no proof of their being any other than graceless characters.

But we agree, it is said, "to take our children to family and public worship; to teach them to read the bible with seriousness and attention, instruct them in catechisms and in private prayer; for all which they have no more understanding than for the Lord's supper." It is not however for want of *understanding* that we object to it, but the want of scripture precept or example. If God had required it, or the first churches practised it, we should think ourselves as much obliged to bring our children to the Lord's supper, as the Israelites were to bring theirs to the passover. It appears to me that great mistakes have arisen, from confounding *moral obligations* with *positive institutes.* The former are binding on all mankind, and therefore require to be inculcated on every one within the reach of our influence: the latter are limited to a part of mankind, usually described in the institutions

themselves. The one being founded in our relation to God and one another, and approving themselves to the conscience, require neither precept nor precedent, but merely a general principle which shall comprehend them; the other having their origin merely in the sovereign will of God, require a punctilious adherence to what is revealed concerning them. While we engage in what is purely moral, and what is therefore right for every one to engage in, we incur no relative guilt, whatever be the motives, or even the manifest characters of those who unite with us, any more than in contributing with an irreligious man for the relief of the poor: but in what is positive, if the parties with whom we unite be virtually excluded by the institution, we are accessory to their doing what, in their present state of mind, they have no right to do. For want of attending to this plain distinction, some have gone so far as to refuse to engage in public prayer in a promiscuous assembly, and even to join in family worship, if any were present whom they accounted unbelievers. Proceeding on the same principle, the "Congregationalist" appears to me to err in the opposite extreme; arguing from our joining in what is right for all men, that we ought to join in what the scriptures limit to certain characters.

The appeal is next made to the new testament. Here it becomes us to be all attention. "Were not the first churches composed of households?" That there were some households in them is clear; and we have some in many of our churches. But why did not the "Congregationalist" *prove* that some of them at least were infants? If he could have done this, all his other arguments might have been spared. It might indeed be supposed, that households will ordinarily consist of some of this description; and if we were not given to understand the contrary in these instances, the presumption might appear in favour of this supposition. But it so happens, that each of these households appear from the scripture accounts to have been believers. Acts xvi. 34—40. 1 Cor. i. 16. xvi. 15.

"Were not parents told, if they believed, they and their *house* should be saved?" The head of one family was thus addressed: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' But surely the meaning of this is, that if he and his house believed, they should all be saved. If Paul and Silas meant to say, his house should be saved, though *he only* believed; why is it added in the next verse, 'And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, *and to all that were in his house?*' The pharisees seemed desirous of establishing their claim on the ground of having Abraham to their father; but John the baptist did not allow of it, but intimated that the axe was now laid to the root of the tree, and that every tree which brought not forth good fruit should be hewn down and cast into the fire. Who would have thought, that "An Old Congregationalist" could have pleaded, not merely for the admission of children to christian ordinances in virtue of the faith of their parents, but for their being actually *saved!* I have heard of certain professors of religion in the fens of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire who hold this opinion with great earnestness, and who on the ground of their forefathers' faith rest assured of salvation, whatever be their own characters; but I should not have expected such a notion to have found an advocate in your worthy correspondent.

"Is there an instance of an adult descendant of a believer, that was admitted into the church throughout the whole of the new testament?" Yes, several. All the households before mentioned were adults, and some of them were doubtless descendants from the heads of those families. But I suppose your correspondent means, there is no instance of their being admitted *at a distance of time after their parents.* And this I believe is true. But it is equally true, that there is no instance of a wife, a husband, or a child, being *converted after their partners or their parents;* cases which nevertheless, no doubt, frequently occurred. The truth is, the new testament is a history of the first planting of the church, and not of its

progress. If such evidence as this amounts to "a moral certainty," that children were received into the church with their parents, I am at a loss what to denominate uncertainty.

The scriptures inculcate a strict and holy discipline, both in the church and in the family; and I cannot but consider it as a strong presumption against the practice for which your correspondent pleads, that the command to 'bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' is addressed, not to ministers or churches, but to *parents*. Nor is there, that I recollect, in all that is said in the apostolic epistles, to parents or children, a word which implies the latter to have stood in the relation of church members.

There is some ingenuity in what is said in answer to *objections*; and if moral and positive duties must be confounded, and we are driven to reason from analogy on the one as well as on the other, there may be some force in it. But if positive institutes require scripture precept or example, the want of these must needs be the grand, and I suspect, the insurmountable objection.

Answer to a Query,

WHETHER JUDAS WAS PRESENT AT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

AFTER carefully reading the account of this matter by the four Evangelists, it appears to me that Judas was *not* present at the Lord's supper, but went out immediately after the celebration of the passover; and that if the contrary were allowed, it would not affect the order of the dissenting churches.

With respect to the former of these positions, MATTHEW speaks of Judas as being present at the Paschal supper, but says nothing of his being present at the Lord's supper. (chap. xxii. 19—30.) The whole of what he writes is perfectly *consistent* with his leaving the company immediately after the former, and before the commencement of the latter; but it makes no mention of it.

The same may be said of the account given by MARK: ch. xiv. 16—26. JOHN is more particular. He tells us that 'having received *the sop*, he went *immediately* out.' (ch. xiii. 30.) Now the act of dipping the bread in wine, and so eating it, pertained not to the Lord's supper, but to the passover. The bread and the wine were each distributed separately in the former, as is manifest from every account we have of it; but in the latter it was not so, as is clear from Matt. xxvi. 23. Mark xiv. 20. John's testimony therefore is very express, that the time of Judas's going out was immediately *after* the passover, and *before* the Lord's supper.

The only difficulty arises from the account of LUKE, who after narrating the administration of the Lord's supper, says, 'But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is *with me on the table.*' (ch. xxii. 21.) The whole force of the argument taken from hence, arises not from any thing *in the words themselves*; for 'the table' may as well signify the paschal table, as the Lord's table; but merely from *the order* in which they are placed in the narration. And as to this, Calvin, who entertained the opinion that Judas *was* present, acknowledges nevertheless, that "though Luke hath set down this saying of Christ *after* the celebration of his supper; yet the order of time cannot be certainly gathered thereby, which we know was often neglected by the Evangelists."

But whether Judas was present at the Lord's supper or not, it does not, as I conceive, affect the order of dissenting churches. It is no part of that order to sit in judgment upon the hearts of communicants, any farther than as they are manifest by their words and actions.

It is as making a credible profession of christianity that we are bound to admit them, and not on the ground of any private opinion, that this profession is sincere. Should we feel in any case a secret dissatisfaction, owing to a want of that union of spirit which a profession of repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ordinarily inspires; yet if what is professed be true religion, and we know of nothing that discredits the sincerity of the party, we are not at liberty to reject. Now such a communicant was Judas, allowing him to have been one. It appears by the other apostles applying the warning, given by Christ, to themselves in a way of enquiry, that they had no particular suspicion of him. And as to his character being known to Christ as the searcher of hearts, he did not act upon that ground in his treatment of men, but upon the ground of what they manifested themselves to be by their words and actions. If Christ's knowledge of Judas's character warrants the admission of unbelievers and known hypocrites into the church, it must also warrant the admission of them to the highest offices in the church: for 'Jesus knew *from the beginning* who it was that believed not, and who should betray him.'

THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE.

EUBULUS, in what he has written upon the Apostolic office, having expressed a wish for the subject to be examined, I take the liberty of suggesting a few hints to his consideration.

Allowing the word *apostle* to signify *a missionary*, it does not seem to follow, that calling an ordinary preacher, who is sent to publish the gospel among the heathen, by the latter name, is improper or 'unscriptural.'

The word διακονειν, which is used of the office of *a deacon*, signifies to minister to the wants of others, or to serve. A deacon was a servant; but it does not follow that the application of the word, servant, to other persons as well as deacons is improper, or unscriptural. A deacon was a servant of *a particular kind*; and such is the idea which the word conveys; but the term servant is more generic, and therefore is properly applied to persons who serve in other capacities as well as this. Every deacon was a servant, but every servant was not a deacon.

It should seem that the same may be said of αποστολος, the term used to express the office of an apostle. It signifies a *messenger*, or *missionary*; but it does not follow that the application of either of these terms to other persons as well as apostles, is improper or unscriptural. An apostle was a messenger, or missionary, of *a particular kind*; and such is the idea which the word conveys; but the terms *messenger* and *missionary* are more generic, and therefore are properly applied to any persons who are sent with a message to a distance. Every apostle was a messenger and a missionary, but every messenger and missionary was not an apostle. Epaphroditus was the αποστολος, or messenger of the Philippians to Paul; (Phil. ii. 25) and those who are called in our translation 'the *messengers* of the churches,' (2 Cor. viii. 23) are denominated by the same name, αποστολοι. The word also that is used for the sending out of ordinary preachers of the gospel among the heathen, properly means *to send on a mission*; and is the same (with only the difference of the verb and the noun) as that which is rendered *an apostle*. 'How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher; and how shall they preach except, αποσταλωσι, *they be sent*. Rom. x. 15.

Upon the whole, I hope EUBULUS will consider his censure of the translators, for naturalizing the term αποστολοι, when applied to those messengers, immediately commis-

sioned by Christ, by rendering it *apostles*, rather than translating it *messengers*, or *missionaries*. The naturalization complained of resembles, in this instance at least, that of the common name by which we denominate the holy scriptures, calling them *the bible*, from βιβλος, *the book*. To have translated this, and called it *the book*, would not have distinguished it from certain *parts* of it, which also bear that name. (Matt. i. 1.) But to call it *the bible*, suggests the very idea required; that is, the book by way of eminence, the book of books. So αποστολοι, if translated messengers, or missionaries, would not have distinguished the tewlve disciples from other messengers, or missionaries; but rendered *apostles*, it conveys the true idea; namely, that of messengers of *an extraordinary kind*, or messengers *by way of eminence*.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE APOSTLES PROCEEDED, IN FORMING AND ORGANISING CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, AND REGULATING VARIOUS RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

Written in April 1804, *for the use of the Brethren at Serampore.*

VARIOUS disputes have arisen among christians, respecting the form, the order, and the organization of the church of Christ. It is from different apprehensions on these subjects, that most of our religious denominations have arisen. Having been often called upon to give advice in certain cases, and to ground it on scriptural authority, I have been led to examine with some attention, what the scriptures teach us concerning them.

It has appeared to me, that some, in looking for scriptural authority for whatever is done in christian churches, expect too much; while on the contrary, others expect

too little. It is a fact, which must strike every attentive reader, that the manner in which the greater part of the worship and forms of the new testament is prescribed, is very different from that of the old testament. Moses was commanded to do all things according to the 'pattern' showed him in the mount: but no such pattern is given us in the gospel, respecting the form and order of christian worship. All, or nearly all, we know of the matter is from the narrative of facts, as stated in the Acts of the apostles, and from certain counsels addressed to ministers and churches, in the apostolic epistles.

In each of these, several things are *incidentally* brought to light; but express injunctions, like those under the law, are rarely to be found. We have no particular account, for instance, of the original formation of a single church, nor of an ordination service, nor in what order the primitive worship was generally conducted. What then shall we say to these things? Shall we infer that all forms of worship and church government are indifferent, and left to be accommodated to time, place, and other circumstances? This would open a door to human inventions, and to all the corruptions which have defaced the church of Christ. Nevertheless, this we may infer, that to attempt to draw up a formula of church government, worship and discipline, which shall include any thing more than *general outlines*, and to establish it expressly on new-testament authority, is to attempt what is utterly impracticable.

The general outlines, or principles of things, may be collected, and these will apply to particular cases. This, I apprehend, is all that we are warranted to expect. If, for example, we look for either precept or precedent for the removal of a christian pastor from one situation to another, we shall find none. But we are taught, that for the church to 'grow unto a holy temple in the Lord,' it requires to be 'fitly framed together.'* The want of

* Ephes. ii. 21.

fitness therefore in a connection, especially if it impede the growth of the spiritual temple, may justify the removal of a minister. Or if there be no want of fitness, yet if the material be adapted to occupy a more important station in the building, this may also justify its removal. Such a principle may be *misapplied* to ambitious and interested purposes; but if the encrease of the temple be kept in view, it is lawful, and in many cases attended with great and good effects.

This example, instead of a hundred, may suffice to show, if I mistake not, that the form and order of the christian church, much more than that of the jewish church, are founded in *the reason and fitness of things*. Under the former dispensation, the duties of religion were mostly *positive;* and were of course prescribed with the nicest precision, and the most exact minuteness. Under the gospel they are chiefly *moral*, and consequently, require only the suggestion of general principles. In conforming to the one, it was necessary that men should keep their eye incessantly upon the *rule:* but in complying with the other, there is more occasion for fixing it upon the *end*.

The form and order of the christian church appear to be no other than what men, possessed of 'the wisdom which is from above,' would at any time very naturally fall into, even though no other direction were afforded them. That the apostles were supernaturally directed, is true; but that direction consisted not in their being furnished with a 'pattern,' in the manner of that given to Moses; but in enduing them with holy wisdom, to discern and pursue on all occasions what was good and right. The jewish church was an army of soldiers, under preparatory discipline: the christian church is an army going forth to battle. The members of the one were taught punctilious obedience, and led with great formality through a variety of religious evolutions. Those of the other, though they also must keep their ranks and act in obedience to command; yet are not required to be so attentive to the mechanical as to the mental, not so much to the minute

observance of forms as to their spirit and design. The obedience of the former was that of children; the latter that of sons arrived at maturer age.

I have said, that the form and order of the christian church are *chiefly* moral, or founded in the fitness of things, as those of the jewish church were *chiefly* positive: for neither the one nor the other will hold true universally. Some things pertaining to the organization of the latter, were settled on the same principles as those of the former. The seventy elders, ordained to assist Moses, bore a near resemblance to the seven deacons, chosen to assist the apostles:* both originated in the necessity of the case, and as such were approved of God. On the other hand, there are some things pertaining to the christian church, which are entirely *positive*; and being clearly revealed, require to be obeyed with the same punctilious regard to the 'pattern' given, as was observed by Moses in constructing the tabernacle. Such are Baptism and the Lord's supper. They were 'ordinances' of God, and required to be kept 'as they were delivered.'† But in many things pertaining to order and discipline, though we are furnished with nothing more than general outlines, and are obliged to keep within them, yet in the filling up there is room left for the exercise of discretion and forbearance.

But it may be asked, will not the considering of these things as *moral*, rather than positive, open a way for the introduction of human inventions into the church of God. Why should it? Though the greater part of what belongs to the organization and discipline of the church be founded in the fitness of things, yet the human mind in its present imperfect and depraved state is not of itself, and without divine direction, sufficient to perceive it. We have so much of the wisdom that is 'from beneath' dwelling in us, that we should be continually erring, if left to ourselves. It is not necessary indeed, in things of this nature, that

* Num. xi. Acts vi. † Matt. iii. 15. Luke i. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 2.

we should be furnished with precepts or examples, with the same minuteness, as in positive institutions; but without so much of one or other of them as shall mark the outlines of our conduct, we shall be certain to wander. If we were left without a revelation from heaven, our ideas of the universal rule of right and wrong, would be very defective and erroneous. In whatsoever therefore the Lord hath condescended to instruct us, we are not at liberty to prefer *what may appear fit and right to us;* but, in like circumstances, are bound to follow it. If I plead for discretion and forbearance, it is only where the scriptures do not decide; and where, consequently, it was thought sufficient by the Holy Spirit to put us in possession of general principles.

I. *That the form and order of the new-testament church were founded in the fitness of things, will appear, I presume, from the following considerations.*

1. The general principles, expressly mentioned by the apostles, as the rule of christian conduct. 'Let all things be done to *edifying*—Let all things be done *decently*, and *in order*.'* Whatever measures tended to build up the church of God, and individuals, in their most holy faith; these were adopted as the rule of their conduct, and rendered binding on them by the authority of Christ.—Moreover, whatever measures approved themselves to minds endued, as those of the apostles' were, with the wisdom from above, as fit and lovely, and calculated to render the whole church effective, like that of good discipline to an army, in the propagation of the gospel; these are the rules by which the primitive christians were governed. And however worldly minds may have abused them, by introducing will-worship and vain customs, under pretense of their *decency*, these, understood in their simple and original sense, must still be the test of good order and christian discipline.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40.

2. The way in which the apostles actually proceeded, in forming and organizing of churches, is a proof that they were guided by a sense of fitness and propriety.—When a number of christians agreed to walk together in the faith and order of the gospel, they became a christian church. But at first they had no *deacons*, and probably no *pastors*, except the apostles: and if the *reason* of things had not required it, they might have continued to have had none. But in the course of events they found new service rise upon their hands, and therefore must have new *servants*:* for, said the apostles, 'it is not *reason* that we should leave the word of God to serve tables: *wherefore* look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.'† In this process we see nothing like a punctilious attention to a positive institute, but the conduct of men who were endued with heavenly wisdom. All things are done 'decently and in order, and all to edifying.' In the course of events, the apostles, who had supplied the place of pastors, would be called to travel into other parts of the world; and then it is likely, the church at Jerusalem would have a resident pastor or pastors of their own.

And as servants were appointed when actual service demanded, so the *number* of them would be regulated by the same rule. A large church or congregation, where much service was to be done, required *seven* deacons; and where they abounded not only in numbers, but also in spiritual gifts, they commonly, if not always, seem to have had a plurality of bishops and elders.—With respect to us, where the *reason* of the thing exists, that is, where there are churches whose numbers require it, and whose gifts admit of it, it is well to follow this part of their example: but for a small church to have more pastors than one, appears to be as unnecessary as to have 'seven' deacons. Such a rule would favour idleness, and prevent

* A deacon signifies a *servant*.

† Acts vi. 2, 3.

useful ministers from extending their labours. To appoint two or three to a station which might be filled by one, must have a tendency to leave many other places unoccupied, and so contract instead of enlarging the kingdom of Christ.

3. The principles on which the apostles proceeded, may appear by tracting the analogy between them and a company of christian missionaries in the present day.—The term 'apostle' signifies one that is *sent*. If we subtract the ideas of being sent immediately by Christ, of being endowed with extraordinary gifts and authority, suited to the special purposes of primitive times, he will, for aught I see, be merely a christian missionary. Let us then suppose a church, or society of christians, to have in contemplation a mission to the heathen. One of the first things demanding their attention would be, the selection of a number of suitable missionaries. Next, they would instruct them in the things necessary to their undertaking; and after this, send them forth to preach the gospel.—Such was precisely the conduct of our Lord towards his disciples. He first selected them; then instructed them, during his personal ministry; and after his resurrection, gave them their commission, and a rich effusion of the Holy Spirit to qualify them for the undertaking.

The missionaries, arriving at the scene of action, would first unite in social prayer, and christian fellowship; and this would constitute the first *church*. Thus the apostles, and those who adhered to them, first met in an upper room for prayer, preparatory to their attack on the world of the ungodly; and this little band of 'one hundred and twenty,' formed the first christian church. And when sinners were converted, and joined them, they are represented as being 'added to the church.'*

Again: The first missionaries to a heathen country could not be chosen to the work by those to whom they were sent, but by him or them who sent them; nor would

* Acts ii. 41—47.

their influence be confined to a single congregation, but extend to all the societies that might be raised by means of their labours. It would be different with succeeding pastors, who might be raised up from among the converts. They would of course be chosen by their brethren, and their authority would be confined to the churches which elected them. Thus the primitive missionaries were not constituted apostles by the churches, but by receiving their appointment immediately from Christ; nor was their authority limited to any particular church, but extended alike to all. In this they differ from ordinary pastors, who are elected by the churches they are intended to serve, and whose authority is confined to that particular department.

Again: The first missionaries to a heathen country would be employed in the *planting* of churches, wherever proper materials were found for the purpose; and if the work so encreased upon their hands as to be too much for them, they would depute others, likeminded with themselves, whom God would qualify with gifts and graces to render them assistance. Some one person at least of this description would be present, in the formation and organization of every church, to see that 'all things were done decently and in order.' And if there were any other churches in the neighbourhood of that in which such an organization took place, their elders and messengers would doubtless be present; and to express their brotherly concurrence, would join in it.

Thus the apostles planted churches; and when elders were to be ordained, the people chose them, and they by the solemn laying on of hands invested them with the office.* And when the work still encreased upon their hands, they appointed such men as Timothy and Titus as Evangelists, to 'set things in order' in their stead.† In these ordinations and arrangements, a Paul or a Titus would preside. The other elders of the church, and pro-

* Acts vi. 3. xiv. 23. † Titus i. 5.

bably of the sister churches, would unite in brotherly concurrence, and in imploring a blessing on the parties; and hence there would be the 'laying on of the hands of the presbytery,' or elders.*

But as the missionaries would die, a question arises: Who would be their *successors;* or rather, on whom would the *general* concerns of the churches devolve?—Strictly speaking, *there might be no necessity for any successors.* The christian religion being planted by them, might be continued by the native pastors, whom God would successively raise up; and who, if 'faithful men,' would not only be concerned to edify and watch over their own respective charges, but would extend the knowledge of the truth, and plant new churches around them. In cases of difficulty, especially those of common concern, they would call in the advice of their brethren, as the first missionaries had done before them;† judging in all things not as lords over a heritage, but as men who must finally give an account.

That this would be the case is more probable, when it is considered, that though the first missionaries had an authority and an influence which no succeeding pastors would possess, yet it was exercised *only in things which it would be lawful for others to do, as well as themselves.* They had no power but what required to be exercised in subserviency to the will of Christ, and for the edification of the churches; and if this rule be retained, and this end answered, it is of no account whether it be done by them, or by the native pastors after their decease. If the former planted churches, set them in order, and presided at the ordination of elders over them; it was not because the same things would not have been *valid,* if done without them, but because they would not have been done at all. Let but churches be planted, set in order, and scripturally organized; and whether it be by the primitive missionaries, or succeeding pastors, all is good, and acceptable to Christ.

* 1 Tim. iv. 14. † Acts xv.

Such, I conceive, is the state of things with respect to the apostles and succeeding pastors. There never were any men, or set of men whatsoever, that were, properly speaking, *their successors.* Nor was it necessary that there should, seeing every thing which they did (excepting what was *extraordinary*, in which respect none *can* succed them) was lawful for every pastor to do in his immediate charge.

If a necessity existed for any superior office or offices, it must be for the purpose of inspecting and preserving the general interest of the whole body: but even this would be more likely to be answered by occasional conferences among the elders.

II. *The following arguments are offered in proof, that the office of a Superior, or of a general Superintendent in the christian church, is both unlawful and unnecessary.*

1. A bishop is the first permanent office in the christian church. It was the highest title assumed for many ages after the apostles. But a bishop is no other than a presbyter, an elder, or overseer of a single congregation; as is evident from each of these names being given to the elders of the church at Ephesus, who met Paul at Miletus.* Any office therefore in the present day, which claims the oversight of bishops, must be antiscriptural.

2. It accords with the genius of christianity, that the churches be governed, and all their affairs adjusted, by mutual consultation and persuasion, rather than by coercion. But where the power has been vested in one or more superior officers, it has commonly degenerated into a lording it over the heritage, and the people have gradually lost all interest in it. If Christ's kingdom were of this world, its officers might require to be invested with worldly honour, pageantry, and authority. Its members also must be governed 'like the horse and the mule, which

* Acts xx. 17, 28.

have no understanding.' But the great Head of the church has told his servants, 'It shall not be so amongst you.' On this ground there might be danger in what you propose in your letters, of having European missionaries as *superintendents* of the native pastors. You should indeed superintend them, but not so as to make it an *office*, or to set an example of lordly domination in future times among themselves.

3. The apostles, in the exercise of their authority, did not act separately from other elders, but in conjunction with them; by which means they gradually enured them to the discharge of the same duties among themselves, after their decease. Paul laid his hands on Timothy, yet not as an individual, in the manner practised by diocesan bishops, but as an elder among other elders.*

In the planting and organizing of churches, the same things which were done by them, were done by others appointed by them; and had they been done by elders whom they had *not* appointed, provided the will of Christ had been properly regarded, they would not, I presume, have objected to their *validity*. This is certainly true, at least, in some particulars; and I see no reason why it should not be the same in all. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, that he might 'charge some to teach no other doctrine.' But if the Ephesian elders had been of themselves attached to the truth, neither Paul nor Timothy would have been offended with them for superseding the exercise of their authority.

The apostle also left Titus in Crete, to 'set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city.' But if the Cretians themselves had had sufficient wisdom and virtue to have regulated their own affairs by the word of God, would their 'order' have been reckoned disorder? And had there been 'elders' already ordained amongst them, who were competent to assist in the ordination of others, if we may judge from the tenour of

* 2 Tim. i. 6. comp. with 1 Tim. iv. 14.

apostolic practice, instead of objecting to the validity of their proceedings, both Paul and Titus would, 'though absent in the flesh, have been with them in the spirit, joying, and beholding their order, and the stedfastness of their faith in Christ.'

III. *I conclude these brief remarks with a few reflections on some particular duties.*

If such be the principles on which the primitive churches were founded, is it not more becoming for us to enquire into the *spirit, reason,* or *design* of various precepts, and adhere to it, than to be always disputing and dividing about the letter of them?

1. There are various precepts in our Lord's sermon on the mount, which I am persuaded *were never designed to be taken literally.* For example, we are commanded to 'swear not at all.' Matt. v. 33—37. Hence many good men have objected to the lawfulness of an oath before a magistrate: yet such oaths were not only allowed, but commanded by the law of Moses.* And our Lord declared that it was not his design, in any thing he here said, to destroy or set aside the law.† None of his answers were aimed against the law, but against the glosses of the pharisees upon it. But to understand him as condemning all kinds of oaths, is to make him condemn the law. Nor is this all: it would go to condemn many things in his apostles, which are written under divine inspiration, as in the following instances. 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever,' said Paul, 'knoweth that I lie not'—'I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth'—'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.'‡ Each of these is a solemn oath: yet we never think of their being sinful. The

* Deut. vi. 13. † Matt. v. 17, 18. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 31. i. 23. Rom. i. 9.

swearing which our Lord forbids, relates to our ordinary 'communications,' which should be 'yea, yea, or nay, nay.' It is this which is forbidden by the apostle James, when he says, 'Above all things, my brethren, swear not, lest ye fall into condemnation.'* Though a barren and profane vice, it was very common among the jews, and is equally so among many who call themselves christians.

Again: Instead of avenging ourselves, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' we are commanded 'not to resist evil.' Did our Saviour mean by this to censure the law, as appointed of God,† and as administered by the civil magistrate? That would be to 'destroy the law,' and not to fulfil it. His design was doubtless to forbid private retaliation and revenge, which the jews had attempted to justify by a perversion of the divine command. He did not complain of the law in the hands of the magistrate, nor forbid his followers appealing to it, where public justice was concerned; but they must do nothing from a principle of revenge, or for the sake of retaliation.

If the command, 'not to resist evil,' were understood literally, and without any restriction; and we were literally obliged, 'when smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also;' our Saviour himself would have erred in not setting the example, when he was smitten before Pilate; for instead of submission, he remonstrated, 'If I have spoken well, why smitest thou me?'‡ But though our Lord's command is not to be taken literally, yet if we attend to the spirit of it, we shall find it to contain a very important lesson. It teaches us that we had better suffer insults and injuries, and even the repetition of them, than undertake to avenge ourselves. It is the principle, rather than the act, which he means to enforce; yet there are cases in which the act itself would be right and praiseworthy.

Unbelievers affect to ridicule this precept; yet who

* James v. 12. † Exod. xxi. 24—27. ‡ Luke vi. 29. John xviii. 23.

ridicules the conduct of Themistocles, the Athenian general, who in a council of war had the cane of Eurybiades shaken over his head; and who, instead of resenting it, exclaimed, "Strike, but hear me!" This instance of magnanimous patience saved his country. And may not a christian have a still greater end in view? If by his patience he should save a soul from death, however infidels may sneer, he will have a weightier crown awarded him another day, than what was decreed for the noble Athenian. The cheerful sufferings of the holy martyrs in all ages have exemplified this principle. While they sought the salvation of mankind, the world hated them: but instead of rendering evil for evil, they practically said, *Strike, but hear us!*

Again: If our Lord's precepts on almsgiving and prayer were understood literally,* they would prove it unlawful to join in any public contributions for the poor, and to engage in public prayer: but it is not the *act* which our Lord has principally in view, but the *principle*, or motive. His object was to condemn a spirit of ostentation, in the same way as we should understand another prohibition: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.'† Some christians have concluded from hence, that all accumulation of property is contrary to the command of Christ. The ill consequences of such interpretations do not lie in their rendering men careless about the world, for there is but little danger of persons who have opportunities of acquiring wealth, erring on that side; but the mischief is, they make men guilty of hypocrisy, in setting them to devise methods by which they may go on in business like their neighbours, and yet find some salvo for their consciences, by which to impose upon themselves. If it were the design of Christ to forbid all accumulation of property, why were the primitive christians directed to 'lay up something for the poor, every first day of the week, according as God had prospered them?'‡ It will hardly

* Matt. vi. 1—6. † Matt. vi. 19. ‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

pleaded, that they were to lay by for this purpose the [illegible]ole of their gains: but if not, they must have been [illegible]owed to labour and trade like other men. Moreover, [illegible] they were forbidden to encrease wealth, why are they [illegible]horted to diligence, 'that they may have whereof to [illegible]ive to him that needeth?'* On this principle also, it would be wrong for parents to provide any thing for their [illegible]ildren, which both reason and scripture allow.†

Finally: If these words require to be taken literally, why should not others of a similar import be understood [illegible] the same way? 'Take no thought for your life, what [illegible] shall eat, or what ye shall drink'—'Sell what ye have [illegible]d give alms.'‡ Yet if such a literal interpretation were [illegible]duced to general practice, it would destroy all distinction of property, and so of rich and poor. This however was not our Lord's design, or he would not have addressed men, much less good men, under the character of rich and poor.§ The accumulation of property, if arising from the blessing of God on our lawful occupations, and considered as a trust to be laid out for him, has nothing wrong in it. The danger is, what our Lord inveighs against, that of making a 'treasure' of it, or setting our hearts upon it as an idol in the place of God, instead of considering all as his, and as requiring all to be employed for him, according to his revealed will. It is the desire to be great, to shine, and to indulge in the pride of life, that is destructive to men's souls. This is the evil everywhere described by such language as the following: 'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts'—'They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.'‖

2. I observe, *the reason of some duties ceases in a greater or less degree, by a change of circumstances.*—This remark,

* Ephes. iv. 28. † 2 Cor. xii. 14. ‡ Matt. vi. 25. Luke xii. 33.
§ James i. 9, 10. ‖ James iv. 3. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

I am aware, is liable to great abuse. Some, under the pretense of accommodating christianity to times and circumstances, may render it a mere temporising system, to be just what its professors may find it their interest or their inclination to have it be. Yet after all, the fact cannot be called in question; and if men will abuse it, they must take the consequence.

It is a fact, that for a man in the times of the apostles to have had 'his head covered' in public worship, was reckoned to be 'dishonouring his head;' for by the custom which then prevailed, it was a sign of subjection.* But in our times the reverse is true; a being *un*covered is the sign of subjection, and the being covered indicates some kind of superiority. Men are now generally uncovered in the time of worship, not for the purpose of maintaining their dignity, or superiority over the women, but on the contrary, for avoiding the appearance of assuming too much in the presence of God, by seeming to refuse that honour to him which is paid to our superiors among men. The woman, on the other hand, was then required to be covered, as by the custom of those times it was a token of her subjection to the man. But though our females still cover the head in public worship, it is not for this purpose, nor does it convey any such idea.

To the same purpose the hair of the man was shorn, and that of the woman worn at length. Each by the custom of the time and place was considered as distinctive of the sexes, which various important purposes in society, and even nature itself required to be preserved. When the apostle asks, 'Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him; but if a woman have long hair it is a glory to her;'† some have thought that, 'by nature,' he means no more than custom. This I apprehend is a mistake. President Edwards has happily expressed what appears to be the true meaning of this passage, in the following words. "It is

* 1 Cor. xi. 4—7. † Ver. 14, 15.

custom which establishes any outward sign, as a token of inward sentiment: therefore when it had established the wearing of long hair as the sign of a female, *nature itself* taught that it was a shame for a man to appear in the known garb of a woman." The truth is, I apprehend, if the proper distinction of the sexes be preserved, by each appearing in that habit which the custom of the age and country makes the distinctive marks of them, the end aimed at by the apostle is fully answered.

[The remaining part of this Essay, consisting chiefly of strictures on the practice of Open Communion, then lately introduced at Serampore, is unfortunately mislaid or lost; but as the sentiments of the Author on this subject have already appeared in a posthumous publication, and also in some of the preseding pages, it is less to be regretted, though the Essay in its present state is left unfinished and incomplete.]

ON LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW CHAPEL.

HAVING been requested to say a few words on this occasion, I wish, my friends, to direct your attention, not so much to the *place* about to be erected, as to the *use* to which, I trust, it will be appropriated. Under the gospel it is not place, but the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth, that is of account.

To fix your attention on this subject, let us read a passage from 1 Peter ii. 4, 5. 'To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious: ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'

Much of the religion of the old testament consisted in the building and worship of the temple; when therefore

the new testament was introduced, it was usual to speak of its religion under this imagery. Thus the passage which I have read alludes partly to the building, and partly to the worship of the temple. As the stones were laid on their foundation, so believing in Jesus, we 'come to him as unto a living stone,' and are 'built up a spiritual house;' and as the priests offered up their sacrifices, so believers are 'a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Yet there were great *disparities* between the jewish and christian temple. The stones of the former, being mere unconscious matter, were brought; here, being conscious and voluntary agents, they 'come.' The foundation there also was mere matter, but here it is 'a living stone;' that was literally a house, this is 'a spiritual house.' Priesthood was there distinguished by descent, here by character; their sacrifices were taken from the herd or the flock, ours from the heart, the offering of prayer and praise, presented in the name of Jesus Christ.

But laying aside the imagery, we may consider the whole as furnishing a description of *individual and social religion.* Social religion begins with individual, and individual religion with 'coming' to Christ.

I. With respect to personal religion, the scriptures make much of our coming to Christ.

However correct we may be in our deportment, and devout at the stated seasons of worship, if Christ be 'disallowed,' all is nothing. Election itself no otherwise secures our salvation, than as it secures our coming to Christ for it. 'All that the Father giveth me shall *come* to me.' The atonement of Christ does not avail us, but as coming to him. It was thus in the atonements under the law: in some cases sins were confessed by the party laying their hands on the head of the victim, and in others by the priest on their behalf: but in no case could they derive benefit, but as 'comers thereunto.'

The first operations of true religion in the mind are in this way. Christ may not be the first object to which a sinner's thoughts are turned; this may be his sin and exposedness to the wrath of God; but let our thoughts of sin and misery be as pungent as they may, if they lead us not to Christ for salvation, there is no true religion in them. He is 'the way' to God: 'no man cometh unto the Father but by him.' We may be burdened under guilt and fear, but till we *come* to him with our burden, there will be no gospel rest for our souls. The promise is not made to us as burdened, but as coming to Christ with our burdens. Matt. xi. 28.

Nor is it confined to the time of our first believing; the christian life consists in coming habitually to Jesus. 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' That which food is to the body, the doctrine of Christ crucified is to the mind. 'Except we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us.'

Our estimation of other objects is often governed by public opinion, but we must appreciate Christ not by what men think of him, but by what he is in the account of God. He may be 'disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious;' and if we are of God, we shall be of God's mind; he that is precious to God will be so to us. May there be many characters of this description, my friends, among you! You will then have materials for building up the spiritual temple, and for the offering up of spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

II. Add a few remarks on social religion, under the same idea of a temple; particularly, on the materials with which it must be built—the important character it sustains—the employment of its priesthood—and the medium through which all their sacrifices must be accepted.

1. The proper materials for the chistian temple are 'lively stones;' else they will not fit a living foundation, nor unite with other living stones in the building. Beware that the desire of being a large and opulent people, may never induce you to overlook this. If it ever come to this, that your members are admitted on any principle short of faith in a living Redeemer, Ichabod will be written upon your doors.

2. The important character you sustain is that of a temple for God to dwell in. If the word of truth be preached among you, the worship of God preserved in its purity, and the ordinances of Christ observed according to their primitive simplicity, God will dwell in you and walk in you, and ye shall be his people, and he will be your God. He makes great account of christian churches, as being the appointed means of establishing his kingdom among men. With what complacency did he speak of ancient Zion; 'This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it—The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.' What a high degree of interest is Christ described as taking in the concerns of the seven churches in Asia. The same idea is conveyed by the judgments denounced against those who have persecuted or corrupted them. 'If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' It was this that opened the gates and broke down the walls of old Babylon; and it is on account of this that another Babylon, the antichristian church, shall come down even to the ground. 'They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.'

3. As to your employment as a holy priesthood, this is to offer up 'spiritual sacrifices.' We have heard much of the christian priesthood, as applied to ministers; but christianity knows of no priesthood, except what is common to all believers. It knows of pastors, bishops and elders; but it is a misnomer to call them priests. It is for you all as christians to offer up prayer and praise,

both for yourselves and others; and may you continue on this spot to offer them!

4. Be not forgetful of the medium through which all your offerings become acceptable—'Jesus Christ.' We must not carry our offerings in our hand, like Cain, presuming to be accepted on account of them. The order of the divine proceedings is the reverse of this. The Lord had respect, not to the offering of Abel, and so to him, but to Abel, and so to his offering. The good works of sinful creatures, even those which are most 'spiritual,' are no otherwise acceptable to God than 'by Jesus Christ.' The case of Job and his three friends serves to illustrate this principle. The Lord was so displeased with them, that he refused to accept even a petition at their hands. 'My wrath, saith he, is kindled against you. Take your offerings, and go to my servant Job: he shall pray for you, and him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly.' Such is our case, and such the intercession of our Redeemer. Him God accepts, and through him our prayers and praises become acceptable to God.

CHARACTER FORMED ONLY BY A COURSE OF ACTION.

Query. Was not David a regenerate man when he slew Uriah by the sword of the children of Ammon; and if so, how can we reconcile his conduct with the apostle's assertion, 'that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him?' 1 John iii. 25.

Answer. The difficulty here suggested would vanish, if it were considered that while the *quality of actions* is determined by their relation to the divine law, the estimate we form of *character* must be regulated by the

habitual course of the life and conduct. If we were to form our opinion of men from particular events in their lives, we should pronounce Noah a drunkard, Aaron an idolator, Jacob a liar, David a murderer, and Peter an apostate; and each of these characters are excluded from the kingdom of God. But such a judgment would evidently be harsh and erroneous, because these things were not of a piece with their general character, but most entirely opposed thereto. The apostle, in the words referred to, is describing those who 'go in the way of Cain,' and whose character and spirit resemble his. Such a man, he affirms, 'hath not eternal life abiding in him.' But in this sense, David was not a murderer. His sin in the matter of Uriah was not the result of those principles on which his character was formed, but a melancholy proof of the force of temptation, even in the case of an eminently good man.

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Letter to Dr. Marshman at Serampore, 1809.

I HAVE been reading the Revelation; writing a brief sketch of what appeared to me the meaning; then comparing my thoughts with those of Gill, Lowman, and Faber. I think I understand more of it by far than I ever did before, and find in it great ground of encouragement to go on in the work of God. The occasion of my attending to this subject, was an application from Dr. Stuart of Edinburgh, who having read a long controversy between Faber and Cuninghame in the Christian Observer, wanted my thoughts upon it.

I am greatly inclined to think, that as chapters xi. xii. xiii. and xiv. contain general descriptions of the rise, reign, and overthrow of the Papal Antichrist, all in the period of 1260 years, or a little more, allowing for its rise before that date began. That the resurrection of the Witnesses, in chap. xi.; the victory over the dragon, in chap. xii.; and the Lamb's company, chap. xiv. (which chapter is a continuation of the foregoing) are all to be understood of the Reformation. The falling of the tenth part of the city by an earthquake, chap. xi., is the overthrow of the French monarchy, one of the ten horns of the beast; and as the seventh angel was to sound shortly after, chap. xi. 15, that he hath sounded since that event. That as the sounding of the seventh angel was to be the signal of the kingdoms of the world becoming those of our Lord and of his Christ; so in the xivth chapter, which synchronizes with the xith and xiith, the triumph of the Lamb's company is followed by an angel having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, ver. 6. This, I hope, means the general spirit among christians of late years; that as Babylon was to fall after the evangelising angel's appearance, (see chap. xiv. 8) so we may soon expect the overthrow of at least the temporal power of popery. And as the seventh seal included the seven trumpets, so the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials; and consequently they are all to follow the sounding of the seventh angel, chap. xi. 15; and are none of them yet poured out, except that the first may be begun. Finally, that we shall not have to wait for the Millennium, in order to see glorious days for the church.

There is a period, I am persuaded, in which the gospel is destined to make a glorious progress, according to chap. xi. 15 and xiv. 6, which are synchronical; while yet the vials are pouring out, as in chap. xvi., and the enemies of Christ opposing it with all their might. The Word of God going forth upon a white horse, chap. xix., is before the Millennium; and the opposition made to his progress

will bring on what is called, in chap. xiv., the harvest and vintage. This is described in chap. xix. as the last battle prior to the Millennium.—Be of good courage, my dear brethren, we shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony.

The period between the sounding of the seventh angel and the Millennium, is like the reign of David, whom the Lord prospered whithersoever he went; but then it was in the face of opposition. The Millennium, on the other hand, will be as the reign of Solomon, who had rest given him from all his enemies round about. Thus Satan will then be bound, and the beast and the false prophet shall go into perdition. This is emphatically the Messiah's rest, which will be glorious. Isai. xi. We may not expect to see the latter, but we may the former; and surely it will be enough for us to follow him that rideth on a white horse, or to rank among the armies of heaven in so glorious a warfare.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS.

EPHESIANS iii. 14—16.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

THE writing and preaching of the apostles had two distinct objects in view. They *preached,* to make men christians; to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. They *wrote,* to make them eminent christians; to quicken believers in their heavenly

race, to promote in them a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Such was the zeal of Paul in endeavouring to accomplish the former, that he counted not his life dear to him, but was willing to die for the name of the Lord Jesus. Nor was he less desirous of the latter, making it the leading object in all his epistles, and the matter of his prayer day and night.

In the apostle's words there are three things which require our notice—the object desired—its importance—and the encouragement we have to seek it.

I. The object in which the apostle was so much interested on behalf of the Ephesians: 'That he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.'

Nothing good is found in fallen man; nothing grows spontaneously in that soil but what is evil. If any thing holy be found there, it must be produced by the Spirit of God, who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. Nor is divine influence less necessary in carrying on the good work after it is begun. Such is our proneness to relax, to grow weary and faint in our course, that we need to be continually 'strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.'

The object prayed for is not *bodily* strength. That is of but little account in the sight of God, though in many cases it becomes the matter of human boasting. Samson was possessed of might in the outward man to a high degree, and a poor use he made of it. Perhaps a more feeble character is not to be met with among those whom the scriptures mention as good men: with all his wonderful exploits, he weakly yielded to the tempter, and became an easy prey to his enemies.

Nor is it mere *mental* ability that is here intended; that was the strength of Solomon. Paul did not pray that we might be made great men, but good men; not that we

might be poets or philosophers, but christians; not that we might excel in genius or learning, but in grace and goodness; that our souls may prosper and be in health, and that we may be strengthened with might in the inner man.

This part of the subject will be better understood by considering some of the symptoms of spiritual might—

1. The manner in which we perform *religious duties* may serve as a criterion by which to judge of our strength or weakness.—If we be christians, we shall worship God in our families, and in secret; we shall search the scriptures, frequent the house of God, and aim to discharge the various duties which pertain to our stations in life. These things we shall feel it incumbent upon us habitually to regard: but the question is how, and in what manner, do we perform these exercises? If our souls be in a languishing state, they will become a task, and not a pleasure to us; we shall be weary of the Lord's service, feel his yoke to be grievous, and while we keep up a round of duty, our devotions will be cold, feeble and unprofitable. But if we be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, we shall count of the return of sacred opportunities, and find that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace. When David longed for water of the well of Bethlehem, three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines to obtain it, hazarding their lives for his sake; while men of weaker attachment would have murmured at the severity of such an enterprise. If we possess a warm heart for Christ, we shall not think much of the time, the talents, the property, or the influence which we may devote to his service; nor count our lives dear to us, if we may but promote his kingdom and glory in the world. 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.' Nor will this pleasure be confined to the public exercises of religion, but will extend to those of a more personal and private nature. It is possible we may feel much animation, and

possess much enjoyment in the outward means, while we are cold and lifeless in the duties of retirement; and this will be the case where the religion of the heart is not cultivated, nor close walking with God carefully maintained. But if we be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, communion with God will be earnestly sought after; private duties will be vigorously attended to, and the closet will yield us pleasure, as well as the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts. There are but few of whom it may be said, as of Caleb and Joshua, that they 'follow the Lord fully.' Multitudes of professors appear to be but half-hearted in religion; they neither wholly relinquish it, nor take it up in earnest; but are desirous of following the Lord so far as is consistent with their carnal ease, their worldly interest, or their sinful passions, and no farther. But if the object of the apostle's prayer be accomplished in us, we shall be decided for God, and prompt in our manner of serving him: not consulting with flesh and blood, not attempting to accommodate our principles and practice to those of the generality, nor wishing to do as little as possible for God, consistently with our own safety; but delighting to do all his will, we shall run in the way of his commandments.

2. The degree of our spiritual strength may be determined by the manner in which we *resist temptation*.—All men are tempted, but all do not resist temptation: this is peculiar to the christian character. Mere worldly men go with the stream; they walk according to the course of this world, and are hurried along with the impetuous torrent. But if we be christians, we are not of the world, and are in the habit of resisting temptations. Yet if our resistance be feeble and indeterminate; if we hesitate, where we ought to be decided; if we look back on Sodom, like Lot's wife, with a lingering desire after those sinful pleasures which we profess to have given up, and regret the loss of sensual gratifications;—Are we not carnal, and walk as men? He who is strengthened with might in the inner man, will not pause when temptations meet

him, nor parley with the tempter; but will readily answer, 'Thus it is written.' It will be sufficient for him to know that God has forbidden this or that. Like a dutiful child, the will of his father is the guide of his conduct, and that alone will furnish sufficient motives for obedience. Thus it is written.

3. The spirit in which we *endure affliction*, will tend to discover the degree of religion we possess.—Affliction is the lot of man, as well as temptation; and we must all get through our difficulties in some way or other; but the manner in which we get through them will show whether we be strengthened with might in the inner man or not. If we faint in the day of adversity, our strength is small. If we be fretful, and murmur at the hand of God; if we sink under the burden, and wish in ourselves to die; we either have no religion at all, or possess it only in a small degree. Great grace would enable us to bear affliction with submission, and even to rejoice in tribulation. Primitive christians were destitute, afflicted, tormented; and yet how happy were they with their lot! They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, and counted it all joy when they fell into divers temptations. Out of weakness they were made strong, and waxed valiant in fight: thus they were more than conquerors through him that loved them.

4. The sense we entertain of *our own weakness*, is also a criterion of our being strengthened in the inner man.—An apostle could say, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' To a worldly mind this may appear highly paradoxical, but a babe in Christ can understand it. When we have the greatest sense of our own insufficiency for what is good, and feel that we are nothing, and without Christ, can do nothing; then are we strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. But if we feel self-sufficient, confident, and disposed to lean to our own understanding; then are we weak indeed, and become an easy prey to the enemy. Peter was never so weak as when he

thought there was no danger of falling, and boldly said, 'Though all men should forsake thee, yet will not I.' Paul was never so strong as when he felt himself to be 'nothing.' When most sensible of our own insufficiency, we shall pray most for strength from heaven, and watch most against temptation; and by this means we shall be strengthened with strength in our souls.

II. We are led to notice the importance and desirableness of the blessing prayed for.

Paul would not have been so importunate in his request, if it had not been of the greatest importance that we should not only be christians indeed, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But there are other reasons which might be offered.

1. The scriptures lay much stress on this, as tending to *glorify God.*—'Herein is my Father glorified,' says our Lord, 'that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.' Every field will bear some fruit, in the ordinary course of things: but it is to the more abundant honour of the husbandman when his field brings forth thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold. So it is not merely by our being christians, that God is glorified, but by our being eminent christians. Nor is this all: if we are desirous only of so much grace as may carry us safely to heaven, it is doubtful whether we shall ever arrive there at last. Abounding in the fruits of righteousness is considered by our Lord as essential to the very existence of true religion: for, says he, '*so* shall ye be my disciples.' Christ himself brought forth much fruit, and it is necessary that we resemble him.

2. *Our usefulness* depends much on our being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—If our souls be in a languishing state, what good can we do in the world? Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is hence-

forth good for nothing. What good can we do in society, amongst our immediate connections, or in our families, but as we diffuse a savour of Christ? And how can this be done, if we ourselves have lost that savour, and are become lifeless and unfruitful in the ways of God. At the close of every day it becomes us to enquire, Has any one been improved by our conversation? Will any one think the better of Christ, from what they have heard or seen in us? Or have we been amongst men, merely as men of the world; and might they not say of us, what do you more than others? He who possesses much religion, will impart more or less of it to those about him: he will not make a show of it, yet it must be seen. There is that in the outward mien, the inward temper, and daily conversation of a man of genuine piety, which indicate that he has been with Jesus. The modesty of his countenance, the meekness and cheerfulness of his disposition, the sweet familiarity and seriousness of his intercourse with men, enliven the circle in which he moves, and recommend the religion which he professes.

III. The encouragement we have to pray, that we may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, is intimated by the phrase, that the Lord would grant it, 'according to the riches of his glory.'

When men are both rich and generous, and willing to give to the necessitous according to their ability, it suggests a very powerful motive to solicit their assistance. But who can estimate the riches of God's goodness, and the boundless extent of his grace! And if he gives 'according to the riches of his glory,' what encouragement is here for prayer. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, saith the Lord. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Let us ask much, and we shall have much: the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy. He who had but one talent, and went and hid it in the earth, lost it: but he

who had five talents, and went and traded with the same, gained five other talents. Men who live to God, and whose whole concern it is to promote his glory, shall find their sphere of usefulness enlarging with their activity, and that God is girding them with strength proportioned to their labours. Like their divine Master, their reward is with them, and their work before them. To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath.

EXPOSITION OF ZECHARIAH X. 4.

Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every oppressor together.

'Out of him,' namely, Judah. Judah had all along been a favoured tribe, from whence proceeded their governors, who were as 'corner stones' in the building; as 'nails,' on which was suspended the glory of the nation; as 'battle-bows' for annoying the enemy, and preserving order at home. See Isai. xxii. 23, 24. The word נגש signifies, to oblige to perform work, or to pay money, either by right or by power. Here it manifestly denotes a *legal exaction*, and therefore ought not to have been rendered 'oppressor.'

Out of Judah also should proceed the *Messiah*, the greatest of all rulers, in whom all these characters are united: and it seems to be of his reign that the passage speaks, and out of regard to him that God would visit his ancient flock, and have mercy upon them, and cause them to be as though he had not cast them off.

INTERVIEW WITH THE REV. JOHN BERRIDGE.

BRIEF notice has already been taken of this gratifying interview;* but as Mr. Fuller himself has detailed the particulars, it will not be unacceptable to the reader, to find the article classed with his miscellaneous papers, especially as it contains much interesting novelty.

As soon as we were seated, says Mr. Fuller, I requested Mr. Berridge to favour us with a few outlines of his life and ministry. The venerable old man then observed, Soon after I began to preach the gospel of Christ at Everton, the church was filled from the villages around us, and the neighbouring clergy felt themselves hurt at seeing their churches deserted. The squire of my own parish too was much offended. He did not like to see so many strangers, and to be so incommoded. Between them both it was resolved, if possible, to turn me out of my living. For this purpose, they complained of me to the bishop of the diocese, that I had preached out of my own parish. I was soon after sent for by the bishop. I did not much like my errand, but I went.

When I arrived, the bishop accosted me in a very abrupt manner. Well, Berridge, they tell me you go about preaching out of your own parish. Did I institute you to other livings? No, my lord, said I; neither do I claim those livings; the clergymen enjoy them undisturbed by me. Well, but you go and preach there, which you have no right to do. It is true, my lord, I was one day at E——n, and there were a few poor people assembled together, and I admonished them to repent of their sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation; and

* Morris's Memoirs of Mr. Fuller, p. 44, new edition.

I remember seeing five or six clergymen that day, my lord, all out of their own parishes upon the bowling green. Poh! said his lordship, I tell you, you have no right to preach out of your own parish; and if you do not desist from it, you will very likely be sent to Huntingdon gaol. As to that, my lord, said I, I have no greater liking to Huntingdon gaol than other people; but I had rather go thither with a good conscience, than live at my liberty without one. Here his lordship looked very hard at me, and very gravely assured me, that I was beside myself, and that in a few months I should either be better or worse. Then, said I, my lord, you may make yourself quite happy in this business; for if I should be better, you suppose I shall desist from this practice of my own accord; and if worse, you need not send me to Huntingdon gaol, as I shall be provided with an accommodation in bedlam.

His lordship now changed his mode of attack. Instead of threatening he began to entreat. Berridge, said he, you know I have been your friend, and I wish to be so still. I am continually teased with the complaints of the clergymen around you. Only assure me that you will keep to your own parish, and you may do as you please there. I have but little time to live; do not bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

At this instant two gentlemen were announced who wished to speak with his lordship. Berridge, said he, go to your inn, and come again at such an hour, and dine with me. I went; and on entering a private room, fell immediately upon my knees. I could bear threatening, but knew not how to withstand entreaty; especially the entreaty of a respectable old man. At the appointed time I returned, and at dinner was treated with great respect. The two gentlemen also dined with us. I found they had been informed who I was, as they sometimes cast their eyes towards me in some such manner as one would glance at a monster. After dinner his lordship took me into the garden. Well, Berridge, said he, have you

considered of my request. I have, my lord, said I, and have been upon my knees concerning it. Well, and will you promise me, that you will preach no more out of your own parish? It would afford me great pleasure, said I, to comply with your lordship's request, if I could do it with a good conscience. I am satisfied that the Lord has blessed my labours of this kind, and I dare not desist. A good conscience! said his lordship: do you not know that it is contrary to the canons of the church? There is one canon, my lord, I replied, which says, 'Go preach the gospel to every creature.' But why should you wish to interfere with the charge of other men? One man cannot preach the gospel to all. If they would preach the gospel themselves, said I, there would be no need for my preaching it to their people; but as they do not, I cannot desist. His lordship then parted with me in some displeasure. I returned home, not knowing what would befal me, but thankful to God that I had preserved a conscience void of offence.

I took no measures for my own preservation, but divine providence wrought for me in a way that I never expected. When I was at Clare hall, I was particularly acquainted with a fellow of that college; and we were both upon terms with Mr. Pitt, the late lord Chatham, who was also at that time at the university. This fellow of Clare hall, when I began to preach the gospel, became my enemy, and did me some injury in reference to ecclesiastical privileges, which I had before enjoyed. At length however, when he heard that I was likely to come into trouble, and to be turned out of my living at Everton, his heart relented. He began to think, it seems, within himself, We shall ruin this poor fellow amongst us. This was just about the time that I was sent for by the bishop. Of his own accord he writes a letter to Mr. Pitt, saying nothing about my 'methodism,' but to this effect: 'Our old friend Berridge has got a living in Bedfordshire, and I am informed he has a squire in his parish that gives him a deal of trouble. He has accused him to the bishop of

the diocese, and it is said, he will turn him out of his living. I wish you could contrive to stop these proceedings.' Mr. Pitt was at that time a young man; and not choosing to apply to the bishop himself, spoke to a certain nobleman, to whom the bishop was indebted for his promotion. This nobleman, within a few days, made it his business to see the bishop, who was then in London. My lord, said he, I am informed you have a very honest fellow, one Berridge, in your diocese, and that he has been ill treated by a litigious squire who lives in his parish. He has accused him, I am told, to your lordship, and wishes to turn him out of his living. You would oblige me, my lord, if you would take no notice of that squire, and not suffer the honest man to be interrupted.

The bishop was astonished, and could not imagine in what manner things had thus got round. It would not do however to object; he was obliged to bow compliance and so I continued ever after uninterrupted in my sphere of action. The squire having waited on the bishop, to know the result of the summons, had the mortification to learn, that his purpose was defeated. On his return home, his partisans in this prosecution fled to enquire what was determined on; saying, 'Well have you got the old devil out? No, said the squire; nor do I think the very devil himself can get him out!'

Mr. Fuller adds, "I greatly admired that divine savour which all along mingled itself with Mr. Berridge's facetiousness, and sufficiently chastised it. His conversation tended to create a frequent but guiltless smile, accompanied with a tear of pleasure. His love to Christ appeared to be intense. When he had gone through his narrative, I asked him to pray for us. He said he was so faint that he could not yet, and requested me to pray. I prayed, and concluded as usual, by asking all in Christ's name. He, without rising from his knees, took up the prayer where I had left it, in some such manner as this. 'Oh Lord God, this prayer has been offered up in the name of Jesus; accept it I beseech thee;' and for five or

six minutes he continued his supplications in a most solemn and savoury manner. We then took leave, with solemn prayer for blessings on each other, as if we had been acquainted for forty years, and were never to see one another again in this world. The visit left a long and lasting impression on my heart, of the beauty of holiness almost matured."

INFINITE EVIL OF SIN.

1. Is not the whole that is meant by the infinite evil of sin, that, on account of the Object against whom it is committed, it is so great an evil as to involve consequences without end.——2. Is not the whole that is meant by the infinite value of Christ's sufferings, that, on account of the dignity of the sufferer, they also involve in them consequences without end.——3. Is not the first of these questions consistent with different degrees of guilt, and consequently of punishment in the sinner; and the second with a finite degree of suffering in the Saviour.——4. Does not the merit of obedience sink, and the demerit of disobedience rise, according to the excellency of the Object.

ANECDOTE OF THE CELEBRATED ROBERT ROBINSON.

WHEN a young man of the city of Norwich, about eighteen years of age, he was walking one morning with a party of young men, who had all agreed to make a holiday. The first object that attracted attention was an old woman, who pretended to tell fortunes. They immediately engaged her to tell theirs; and that she might be duly qualified for the undertaking. they made her thoroughly intoxicated with spirituous liquor. Robinson was informed, among other things, that he would live to a very old age, and would see his children and grandchildren growing up around him. And though he had assisted in producing intoxication, he had credulity enough to be struck with those parts of her predictions which related to himself. If I live to a great age, said he to himself, I shall be a burden to the young people. What shall I do? There is no way for an old man to render himself more agreeable to youth, than by sitting and telling them pleasant and profitable stories. I will then, during my youth, endeavour to store my mind with all kinds of knowledge. I will see and hear, and note down, every thing that is rare and wonderful, that I may sit, when incapable of other employment, and entertain my descendants. Thus shall my company be rendered pleasant, and I shall be respected rather than neglected in old age. Let me see, what can I acquire first? Oh, here is the famous methodist preacher WHITFIELD! He is to preach to-night, they say: and I will go and hear him.

From these strange motives, Robinson went to hear Whitfield, who preached that evening from Matt. iii. 7. 'But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, Oh generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to

come?' The preacher described the Sadducean character, said the young man; but this did not touch me. I thought myself as good a christian as any man in England. From this he went to that of the Pharisees. He described their exterior decency, but observed that the poison of the viper rankled in their hearts. This rather shook me. At length he abruptly broke off, paused for a few moments, and burst into a flood of tears. Then, lifting up his hands and eyes, he exclaimed, "Oh, my hearers, *the wrath's to come! . . . . the wrath's to come!*" —The issue was, that Robinson soon after made a public profession of religion, and in a little time became a very considerable preacher.

Mr. Fuller adds, that these circumstances were mentioned to him by Mr. Robinson himself; and the reader will recollect, that he was pastor of the baptist congregation at Cambridge, and the author of several ingenious and learned publications.

THE FINAL CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS.

Replies to some objections of Rev. John Newton, St. Mary Woolnoth.

I HAVE received a letter, says Mr. Fuller, from Father Newton, very highly approving of *The Gospel its own Witness*; and understanding that a second edition of the work was now at press, he proposes a few emendations. The worst of it is, that advice offered by such venerable men as him, and Dr. John Erskine, and with such a degree of friendship, can hardly be refused; and yet if one were to follow every body's counsel, I might alter all that I have written. His objections however are confined to a few expressions in pp. 300—303, of the first edition.

I have said, "It is not improbable that the earth thus purified, [by the general conflagration] may ever continue the resort, if not the frequent abode, of those who are redeemed from it. Places, where some of the most interesting events have transpired, when visited at some distance of time, often become in the present state of things a considerable source of delight. Such was Bethel to Jacob, and Tabor, no doubt, to the three disciples; and if any remains of our present sensations should attend us in a state of immortality, a review of the scenes of our Lord's birth, life, agony, and crucifixion, as well as of many other events, may furnish a source of everlasting enjoyment."

On this statement, accompanied with some other remarks, Mr. Newton asks—

1. "Why may not 'a new heaven and a new earth,' be expounded figuratively, as in other places; and be referred to the kingdom of God upon earth, the gospel state?"—I answer, No: the new heaven and new earth are represented as *following* the general conflagration. 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13. 'The heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' In the Revelation, this state is also represented as *following* the last judgment. 'I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' Chap. xxi. 1, 2.

2. "May we not pray that 'the will of God may be done upon earth as in heaven,' without looking so far forward as the final consummation of all things?"—We may in some degree, but not fully, or without having a reference to the final state of things. When we pray to be made like Christ ourselves, we always look forward to the time when we shall be perfected, as the period in which our request shall be *fully* answered. So it is in this case,

and as this does not hinder our praying for progressive sanctity in the use of all the means of grace, so neither does the other hinder our praying for the success of Christ's kingdom. In both cases we cannot pray for the ultimate end, without praying for all the means by which it is effected.

3. "Does not the desire of revisiting the spots and scenes of past transactions, belong to our present situation and conformation. Will it not, like many of our human and social feelings, have no farther influence upon the soul, when freed from the body, and from the earth?"—It may be so: and I think I shall alter this a little, as well as add something on the second question.

4. "Suppose we had a desire to visit these places after the conflagration, how shall we find them? We cannot now ascertain where Eden was, and many other things; owing perhaps to the alteration made in the earth by the flood. But the alteration produced by the final conflagration, will probably be much greater."—Perhaps we may then be better geographers than we are now. Many places are at present wisely concealed from us, to prevent abuse from superstition, of which we shall then be in no danger.

Such would be my answers to Mr. Newton, if he were a *brother*; but he is a *father*, and so full of love and kindness that I know not what to do with him.

THE CHOICE OF MOSES.

HEBREWS xi. 24—26.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.

COMMON history generally overlooks the servants of God, as unworthy of its notice. The world has thought it worth while to hate and persecute them in all ages, but not to record either their lives or deaths. Statesmen, warriors, philosophers, poets, and the like, are held up to view, while they and their memorial are consigned to oblivion. It is not so however in God's history. The world loves its own, and God loves his own. God's history takes as little notice of the sons of the mighty, as man's history does of the sons of the holy, exhibiting them as a succession of wild beasts, who have rendered themselves conspicuous only by their rapacity; while it holds up the characters whom they have traduced, as men 'of whom the world was not worthy.' What a catalogue is given us in this chapter! To have a name in such a record is true honour.

Among these worthies stands the name of *Moses*. From his early childhood he was an object of the special care of heaven; and when arrived to years of maturity he was a believer, and an eminent servant of God.

It is pleasing to observe how the apostle finds an evangelical spirit in old-testament saints. Moses was distinguished as the lawgiver of Israel, and he venerated the law which he had the honour to dispense. He did not

trust in his obedience to it for acceptance with God however, but in Christ, in whom he believed. Yes, the religion of Moses was an attachment *to Christ*, though at that time he was known only by promise. Moses had also an expectation of the earthly Canaan, of that goodly mountain and Lebanon, though for his sin in a single instance he was deprived of it: but his principal *respect* did not terminate here, but on *a recompense of reward* beyond the grave, even in that better country, in the faith of which the patriarchs lived and died.

To illustrate and vindicate the choice of Moses, which is here celebrated, is all I shall attempt. There are three remarks which offer concerning it.

1. The choice of Moses is ascribed to *faith*.—He believed in the Messiah who was promised covertly to Adam, and to Noah, and more explicitly to Abraham, as the Seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He also believed in the invisible realities of a future state. And thus his faith determined him to embrace even the reproach of Christ, and to relinquish every thing which stood in the way of the heavenly prize. The choice of Moses was free; yet it was not the effect of free will, but of faith in Christ, and which was the gift of God. And if we make the same choice, it will be owing to the same cause.

2. It was made under the strongest *temptations*.—The refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, was in effect refusing a crown; for she is supposed to have been the only daughter of the king of Egypt, and to have had no children of her own. Moses therefore appears to have been designed for a successor to the throne. For this also he seems to have received a suitable education, being 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.' All things conspired to tempt him. Fortune with her flattering smiles, invited him to her banqueting house, and to think no more of his abject relations. Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, was her language. Apis must be thy God, and worship thou him.

We who are stationed in the common ranks of life may think but little of such a temptation. A crown never having been within the reach of our expectations, it may possess but few charms for us. We cannot be ignorant however, that for such stations, men in high life have frequently sacrificed every thing. Poor Henry iv. king of France, about two hundred years ago, though a protestant in principle, and a truly great man, yet rather than relinquish a crown, abjured his religion. It is true, our James ii. lost his throne, through his attachment to popery; but he meant not so, and even his friends ridiculed him for it. "There is a certain good man, said they, lately come to Rome, who has resigned three crowns for a crucifix!"

There is no principle that is equal to the choice which Moses made, but faith. Nothing else can find an object that will outweigh it. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

3. In making such a choice, the best of this world was weighed against the worst of religion, *the reproaches of Christ*, and yet the latter was preferred.—If the best on Christ's side had been weighed against the worst on the side of the world, or even the best on both sides against each other, the triumph had been less glorious. But here we see in one scale the pleasures of sin, and the treasures of a mighty empire; objects for which men are continually sacrificing their health, peace, conscience, character, lives, and souls; in the other, Christ and religion, with the greatest outward disadvantages; yet the latter preponderates. An attachment to the cause of the Messiah, would at any time excite the reproaches of proud men; but at this time more especially, when his kingdom seemed so unlikely to prevail, that his subjects were actually in a state of slavery. 'The people of God' are at all times, more or less, in an afflicted state; but now the waters of a full cup were wrung out to them: yet with all these disadvantages, faith obtains the victory. Many

are daily choosing the world, with not a thousandth part of this to choose; and setting light by Christ and his people, with not a thousandth part of this to refuse.

To a mind blinded by carnality, the choice of Moses will appear fanatical and foolish: but it was not so. Faith and right reason are not at variance. His decision was as wise as it was just. He did not choose afflictions and reproaches for their own sake; for he had all the feelings of a man as well as we. His choice terminated on *the recompense of reward,* which, like the joy that was set before the great Object of his faith, enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame.—More particularly,

1. The things which he refused would last only *for a season:* but the things which he chose were of everlasting duration. We measure periods in all other estimations; and why should we not in this? Who would give so much for a short lease, or rather, an uncertain tenure, as for a full purchase, and a lasting possession?

2. The society of the people of God, though afflicted, reproached, and persecuted, exceeds all the pleasures of sin, *while they do last.* It is delightful to cast in our lot with them; for the bond of their union is holy love, which is the sweetest of all sweets to a holy mind. If we have once tasted of this, every thing else will become comparatively insipid. How sweet a bond of union is the love of Christ—how sweet is the fellowship of saints! Even when borne down with reproaches and afflictions, how sweet are the tears of sympathy. What are the country and the gods of Moab to Ruth, after having lived in a religious family, and become acquainted with the true and living God? And what are the discouragements which Naomi presented, on the ground of future poverty and neglect? 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee,' was her answer: 'for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me!'—The Lord, moreover, hath spoken good concerning his people, and he delights to do them good. This motive was held up by Moses to Hobab, to induce him to cast in his lot with them; and in persuading his friend, he doubtless made use of the same considerations which had prevailed on himself.

3. The very reproaches of Christ contain *greater riches*, than all the treasures of this world. They carry with them, not only the testimony of a good conscience, but the approbation of God; and these are substantial riches. They are accompanied with the fellowship of Christ; for in suffering for him, we suffer 'with him;' and these also are substantial riches. Nor is it a small thing to be counted worthy to suffer for his name sake. It becomes the servants of Christ to consider the reproach of his enemies as their honour, and to bind it to them as a crown.

Let us then enquire what is our choice. We may not have the offer of a crown; or if we had, it might have but little influence upon us. The desires of man are mostly confined to things a little above his present situation, or which are next within his reach. A good estate, or a well-watered plain, might weigh more with many of us than a kingdom. Nor may the people of God in our day lay under such reproaches and afflictions, as in the times of Moses. But this only proves that our temptations are not so strong as his; and consequently, that if the world conquer us, we shall be the less excusable. But the world and Christ are in competition for our choice, and we are required to give a decisive and immediate answer. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. There are many who can and do say as Joshua did, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. His people shall be our people, and his cause our cause. If any refuse, and prefer the present world before him, be it known to them, that as is their choice in this world, such will be their portion in that which is to come.

FINAL DESTRUCTION OF MYSTICAL BABYLON.

ISAIAH lxiii. 1—6.

Who is this! that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This! glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

IT is not uncommon, I believe, to understand this sublime passage of the coming of the Messiah, to shed his blood for the salvation of his people;* but it is evidently the design of the Holy Spirit to describe the apparel of the conqueror, not as red with his own blood, but with that of his enemies. The event described is not any personal appearance of the Messiah, but a tremendous carnage among the wicked, which he would accomplish by his providence, and which should issue in favour of his church. The dreadful overthrow of Jerusalem, and that of the Roman heathen empire, are each represented by 'the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of hea-

* This erroneous idea is countenanced by a misprint in one of Dr. Watts's Hymns, where the pronoun 'my' is substituted for *their*. See book i. hymn 28, verse 5, last line.

ven;' each being a day of judgment, as it were, in miniature.* The objects of his vengeance are described under the name *Edom*, the ancient enemy of Israel, in much the same way as Rome is called *Babylon*, as being another Babylon to the church of God.

The period to which the prophecy refers, may I think be collected with a good degree of certainty; partly from the context, and partly from the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation of John, where many things appear to be borrowed from this passage. The foregoing chapter, namely, the sixty-second, is manifestly prophetic of glorious times yet to come; times when 'the righteousness of the church shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth'—when she shall be 'a crown of glory in the hand of her God'—when she shall be 'called Hephzi-bah, and her land Beulah; for the Lord will delight in her, and her land shall be married'—and when 'God himself shall rejoice over her, as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride.'

The three last verses seem to have an allusion to the taking of old Babylon, and to the consequent deliverance of the church from her captivity; in which Cyrus and his armies, though messengers of death to the former, were to the latter the harbingers of life and peace. And while they should be 'going through and through the gates,' the friends of Zion are commanded to 'prepare the way, and to lift up the standard.' Analogous to this shall be the overthrow of mystical Babylon. Her gates, which have long been barred, must be thrown open. At them destruction shall enter to her, but salvation to those whom she has oppressed and persecuted: and while this is going on by instruments that 'mean not so,' let the friends of Christ be active in their proper sphere, 'preparing the way,' removing obstructions, and 'lifting up the standard' of evangelical truth. Lo, then 'cometh the salvation of Zion: behold his reward is with him, and his

* Luke xxi. Rev. vi. 12—17.

work before him!' The issue is: the church shall become 'a holy people, the redeemed of the Lord: and she shall be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.'

It is thus that the sublime passage under consideration is introduced. It is not enough to say, the Salvation of Zion *will* come; but we are presented, as it were, with a sight of Him, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, declaring to his admiring people, that the day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed, the jubilee of the church *is come!*

Then follows a penitential confession of the jewish church, which is supposed to be overwhelmed and melted into repentance by his great goodness, and the multitude of his loving kindnesses towards them, amidst all their disobedience and rebellion against him. It is not difficult to perceive from hence, that the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. But another source of evidence of the same thing may be taken from the nineteenth of the Revelation, where many things, as already noticed, are borrowed from this passage. As in Isaiah, so here we see a glorious personage in warlike attire: 'His name is Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.' The fowls of heaven are called together to eat the flesh of kings, and of captains, and of mighty men, and of horses, and of them that sat on them, and of men both free and bond, small and great. The issue of this dreadful war is, that the beast and the false prophet are taken; Satan is bound, and Christ reigns.

But little if any doubt, I think, can be entertained of the events in these two passages being the same, and of their being designed to describe the tremendous wars by which the great Head of the church accomplishes the ruin of antichrist. 'Behold, he cometh as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.'

ON THE WELLBEING OF A COUNTRY.

THE 21st of Sep. 1803 was fixed upon, by several dissenting ministers in London, as a day of fasting and prayer on account of the state of the nation;* and they expressed a wish that their brethren in the country would unite with them. Being at one of those meetings in the country, I was forcibly struck with an idea suggested in a passage of scripture which was read on that occasion. It was Isai. v. 5. 'And now, go to: I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.'

I had often heard it observed, from the intercession of Abraham in behalf of Sodom, and other scriptures, that God might spare a country for the sake of the righteous few; but never recollect hearing it noticed before, that the sins of professing christians might also be the principal cause of a nation's overthrow. Certainly the *church* is here represented as God's vine, the grand object of his care. He *fences* it by his providence, cultivates it by the means of his grace, and looks that it should bring forth grapes, or fruit to his glory. But if instead of this it bring forth wild grapes, what inducement can he have to continue the fence?

I am more afraid, said the minister on the above occasion, on account of the sins of my country, than from the threatenings of the enemy: and I am much more afraid

* Several days of public fasting and prayer were voluntarily held by the dissenting body, at distant intervals, during the war with revolutionary France; and this in 1803 was in contemplation of the French invasion. ED.

for the sins of professing christians in my country, than I am for those who are openly profane. It is true, they are wicked, and will not go unpunished: but God does not *look* to them for fruit in such a manner as he does to us. If the *hedge* be taken away, and the wild boar of the wood suffered to enter in and destroy, I fear it will be principally, though not wholly, on our account. Our ingratitude, lukewarmness, worldly-mindedness, animosities, divisions, scandals, and other evils, may be more offensive to God, than all the wickedness of the land besides.

If these remarks be just, what a weight lies upon the religious part of a nation; who either prove, like Paul, the salvation of them that sail with them; or like Jonah the principal cause of the storm!

REFLECTIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Extracts of a Letter, during the alarm of an Invasion in 1803.

I HAVE been much struck of late, in reading the Epistle of Jude; and think I see there the very character of some of our modern democrats.* (1) They were wicked men; yet they crept in unawares amongst religious people, ver. 4.—(2) They were apostates from the truth, after the example of the devil himself, ver. 5, 6.—(3) They were lascivious characters, given over to fornication and all uncleanness, ver. 7.—(4) They were despisers and depreciators of civil government, using language concerning their superiors which an angel dare not use of the devil himself, ver. 8, 9.—(5) Their real object, whatever

* See Morris's Memoirs of Mr. Fuller, p. 71.

were their pretences, was the hope of plunder and of power, ver. 11.—(6) The admission which some christians gave them into their churches, was to their reproach, ver. 12.—(7) They are characters whose society we should avoid, as we tender our own salvation; for the course which they steer leads to perdition, ver. 12, 13.

[Its having been suggested by a correspondent, that the characters described by *Jude* were apostates from the truth, and not the enemies of the state, the subject had nothing to do with civil government; and that as the fatal consequences of Cain's impiety, of Balaam's covetousness, and Corah's rebellion, are adduced by the apostle as a warning to those in his day; it must allude to the rejection of divine authority, and the government which God has established in his church. This objection elicited from Mr. Fuller the following defence and modification of his previous statement.]

It is certainly true, that 'the error of Balaam,' Jude 11, was not *jacobinism*, and that the sin of Cain and of Corah was not committed against *civil* government. But on a reperusal of the Epistles of Peter and Jude, it does not appear to me that civil government can justly be *excluded* from the things against which these men set themselves. There is nothing surprising that they should despise and set themselves against *all* that which set itself against their lusts, which every species of legitimate authority did, whether civil or ecclesiastical. It is thus interpreted by all the expositors and lexicons to which I have access. They admit indeed that the passage referred to in 1 Pet. ii. 10, proves a part of their opposition and contempt to have been directed against Christ, and the authorities in his church; but consider other parts of it as directed against civil government. The term rendered 'government or dominion,' in 2 Pet. ii. 10 and Jude 8, is never applied, I believe, to ecclesiastical authority, but either to that which subsists among the different orders of angels, or to civil government amongst men. Ephes. i. 21. Col. i. 16.

Christ, it is true, exercises all authority and dominion; but the *dignities* which they blasphemed, do not seem to relate to his spiritual authority. Moreover, the argument used by the apostle Jude in ver. 9, seems to imply that the authority or dominion, against which these men set themselves, had in it *a mixture of evil*, which afforded them a handle for running it down. Jude's answer is, Be it so, that it has a great many evils attending it, as administered by wicked men; yet an archangel, when speaking to the worst of beings, did not dare to use such language as theirs. The answer supposes that to exist which did not exist in Christ's spiritual government, nor yet in the ecclesiastical government of the church at that time; but which might well be supposed to exist in the imperial government of Rome, under which the early christians suffered so much persecution.

POLITICAL SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I HAVE been much edified by some things which appeared in print, respecting the present state of our country, especially by those which have been directed against what may with propriety be called Political self-righteousness. I am persuaded this is a sin which cleaves closer to men, and even religious men, at the present time, than most of us are aware of; and that we are more in danger from it, than from almost all our other national sins put together.

I have heard it said in conversation, when the sins of the nation have been mentioned as a ground of fear, 'True; but we are not so bad as our enemies.' Mr. Robert Hall, in his fast sermon lately published,* has shown,

* "Sentiments proper to the present Crisis." Oct. 19th 1803.

with great force of evidence, the folly of this way of speaking. The thing itself, considering our religious advantages, he observes, is very doubtful; and if it were otherwise, it has been common with the great Disposer of events to punish a nation that has had a portion of true religion in it, by one that has been utterly irreligious, though afterwards he has poured out his wrath upon the latter.

I have heard it still more frequently said, 'The Lord has many praying people in this country; surely therefore he will not deliver us up.'* A praying people may indeed avert the divine judgments; but if we trust to the efficacy of our prayers, we shall be more likely to bring them upon us. This notion has been well combated by another correspondent;† and my soul unites with his in trembling for the consequences of our religious self-complacency. Alas, our navy and our army, it is to be feared, will too generally trust in themselves: but let not them that fear God do so too. Our brethren in distant countries may hope the best of us; the good minister at Berlin may be allowed to mention 'the numbers whose prayers continually rise to God in this country;' but we must not depend upon them ourselves, for this will render them of none effect.

There is a passage in that admirable book, the Holy War, which I could scarcely ever read without tears. When Mansoul, in the day of her distress, had drawn up a petition to Emanuel, a question arose, by whom it should be sent. 'Now, says the writer, there was an old man in the town, and his name was Mr. Gooddeed, a man that bare only the name, but had nothing of the nature of the thing. Now some were for sending him; but the recorder, Conscience, was by no means for that;

* Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, has fostered this delusive sentiment.

† One who wrote in the Evangelical Magazine on the capture of the Missionary ship Duff, by a French privateer, on its second voyage to Otaheite. Ed.

for, said he, we now stand in need of, and are pleading for mercy; wherefore, to send our petition by a man of his name, will seem to cross the petition itself. Should we make Mr. Gooddeed our messenger, when our petition cries for mercy? Besides, quoth the old gentleman, should the prince now, as he receives the petition, ask him and say, what is thy name; and nobody knows but he will, and he should say, old Gooddeed, what think you that Emanuel would say but this: Aye, is old Gooddeed yet alive in Mansoul? Then let old Gooddeed save you from your distresses.—And if he says so, I am sure we are lost; nor can a thousand old Gooddeeds save Mansoul.'

We subscribe to all this in matters which respect our eternal salvation, but it is no less applicable to things of time. Instead of religious people flattering themselves with the idea of being the bulwark of their country, it becomes them to take heed lest they prove the contrary. Though the religious people in a nation may, by their interest with heaven, be its greatest blessings; yet there are cases in which they may prove the reverse. To Paul was given, not only his own life, but the lives of all them that sailed with him: but Jonah had well nigh been the destruction of those that sailed with him. God does not look for those things, as I may say, from the ignorant and ungodly, as he does from them that know him. It is their province to stand between God and their country: but if they be loose, lightminded, vain or worldly, what is to be expected? We may declaim against the wickedness of the slave trade, and many other things: but are there not with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God?

Thus spake the Lord by his prophet: 'The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine

indignation upon them: I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath.' Ezek. xxii. 29—31.

God's ancient people were compared to a vine, and their country to a vineyard: this vine was cultivated with great care and expense, and a hedge of defence was set about it. But when he looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. What was the consequence? 'Go to, saith the Lord, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.' Isai. v. 5. If God's vine bears no fruit, the wall that protects it may be expected to be broken down on its account; and thus our unfruitfulness may not only dishonour God, and injure ourselves, but render us a curse to our country.*

I write not thus, to promote dismay. I have never for a moment been the subject of such a feeling; but to cut up, as far as many be, self-righteous hope, and to excite that humble and holy trembling which becomes sinful creatures, whether in respect to this world or that which is to come.

THOUGHTS ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

An original letter, written in March 1808.

THE question proposed for discussion is,—*Whether the obedience to Civil Government, required in the scriptures, includes* ATTACHMENT?

It certainly does not include attachment to any thing, but what is declared to be 'an ordinance of God;' nor to

any person or persons, but as officers executing that ordinance. It does not necessarily include an attachment to the constitution of a country, which when compared with others, may be very oppressive and unjust. Nor to particular measures, which may be equally so. But even in such cases there is an 'honour' due to government, which in its worst forms is preferable to anarchy; and which, notwithstanding the most unjust procedures, is still in itself the ordinance of God. It is thus in parental authority. The duty of a child to obey a parent who may be harsh and unkind, is not obliterated; nor is it enough for him to yield the obedience of fear, out of regard to his own interest. He ought to do it from a conscientious regard to the will of God, who has made him his parent. A violent father once fell foul upon his son, a young man about twenty years of age. The son made no other resistance than to ward off the blows, and said, I could do what I please with you; but you are my father! Such is the spirit which ought to be cherished towards the worst civil government. The young man not only conformed to those orders which his father might give him, but felt an attachment to him as a father; and was not to be driven from his duty, because the other had forgotten his.

All this proceeds upon the supposition of our living under the worst of governments, which is so far from being the truth, that almost any one would think it the best in Europe, if not in the world. A large proportion of those who have left their country, under a contrary impression, have seen cause to repent of their folly and ingratitude. The civil liberty contained in the British government, is the very cause of its being worse thought of and spoken against, by one part of its subjects, than that of any other country. Were one of these in France, and even a member of the legislature, he must not open his mouth in the manner he does in England. It is a part of our civil constitution, to admit of free debate; and an opposition to the administration of the day, though generally con-

ducted on mere party principles, is considered upon the whole as a salutary check on men in power. It is a mode of balancing evils, by suffering one set of them to weigh against another. Hence it is that a Tory administration in England, being watched by Whigs, would not be materially unfriendly to liberty; and Whigs, if not watched by Tories, would soon become as bad as the other. But while these parties are invariably assailing their rivals, in hope of supplanting them, it is not for the wise and the good to enlist themselves under their respective standards, or to believe half what they say. If within my remembrance, only a tenth part of what has been foretold by the opposition interest had been true, we should ere now have ceased to be a nation.

'Oh but,' say some, 'we are going fast to ruin! Provisions rise, farms let for double and treble what they did, and the taxes are enormous.' And what does the rise of provisions and of land prove, except that the country is full of money? All buying and selling is only an exchange of commodities; and according to the quantity and demand for any article, such is its price. To say that provisions are dear, is only saying that money is cheap. 'Oh, but it is not money, it is paper.' So long however as the nation is solvent, and can pay its debts, paper is the same as money. With respect to the amount of taxes, it is not of much account so long as we have the means of paying them. A London tradesman might say, My rent and taxes are so high in the city, I'll go and take a farm or a house in the woodlands! Such in effect has been the reasoning of some of our emigrants. Yet it may be asked, do we not live better, wear better clothes, and occupy more comfortable dwellings than our forefathers did; and whether, where one fortune was gained a century ago, there be not six or seven now? These things may seem nothing to those who are 'complainers' by profession; for if God should have determined, for our ingratitude and other sins, to bring us under a foreign

yoke, as he has brought the continent of Europe,* we shall then know our present advantages by the loss of them.

To form our opinion of the measures of government, by daily reading one class of the opposition papers, is much the same as judging of them from the philippics of the French Moniteur; or making up an opinion of the Missions to the east, by purchasing and reading all the pieces of Major Scott Waring. If we choose to be deceived, deceived we shall be and ought to be. If I am attached to government *as government*, irrespective of the men who administer it, I shall be willing to find their measures right, and unwilling to find them otherwise, unless compelled so to think by evidence. I shall never take pleasure in traducing it, nor in hearing it traduced. If in any case I think it in the wrong, I shall speak of it, if at all, with regret. But if I choose to enlist under the banners of a systematic opposition, and to learn all that occurs from their report, I shall presently enter into their prejudices, and become their dupe. They are fighting for a substance indeed, but I for a phantom. So when these 'patriots' get into power, I wonder and admire, and am then 'attached' to government, not because the new testament enjoins it, but because my favourites bear rule; and thus, both when they are out of office and when they are in, I am out of the way of christian obedience.

How can I be said to 'honour' magistrates, while I view all their actions through the representations of men whose interest it is to supplant them; discrediting every thing good, and believing every thing evil? "Buonaparte," said one of the opposition prints, "is conciliating people of all religions; but our government is going to convert the Hindoos to christianity!" Is not such a suggestion sufficient to show what these men are? It is well enough

* Revolutionary France had at that time subjugated nearly all the monarchies of Europe. ED.

known, that our government are not going to convert the Hindoos, and that if they let those men alone who would endeavour to convert them, it is all that can be said or hoped of them. How utterly unprincipled and base therefore must such a writer be! Yet from these men some people form their ideas of the government that protects them. If I must judge of public measures, let me judge righteously, and not by appearance, or from personal regards. John vii. 24.

Government may have done wrong in pursuing certain measures, but it is not from their being accused of it by interested men, that we ought to believe it. Those who are now in power were lately in opposition, and then they were patriots, and every thing was going to ruin. There never was a period in British history when, in the opinion of what is called the opposition, let that opposition be on which side it might, the nation was not going to ruin; and when its humble adherents did not think so. The new testament tells us, 'they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.' Now a small acquaintance with things will enable us to perceive, that they who 'attend continually to one thing,' may in a hundred instances have reason for their conduct, of which those who only attend to it as an occasional amusement are very incompetent to judge. Let a disaffected member of a christian church, judge of the measures of its officers, and he will find them all wrong. Should he also be desirous of gaining an ascendency, and can persuade a few others to judge of those measures through the medium of his representations; it is easy to imagine what sort of treatment the pastor and his colleagues would be likely to receive at their hands. The minister might feel indignant, and say to his friends, This man wants to be in power, and the rest are his dupes. We 'attend continually upon this very thing,' and do to the best of our ability. But these men neither know our reasons, nor wish to know them; but having set us down as bad, conclude that nothing we do can be right.

What is that 'honour' and 'obedience' due to government, and that prayer to God 'for all who are in authority,' which the scriptures enjoin,* but an attachment to them as magistrates, irrespective of their party. We cannot pray for them as we ought, unless we feel a sincere attachment. There need not a greater proof of this, than the base perversions of God's word which have been made on this subject by some disaffected men. 'I pray for kings and rulers as men,' says one, 'the same as I pray for other men.' Yes, but you are required to pray for them *as men in authority.* 'Well,' says another, 'I can pray that God would restrain their iniquity, and prevent their doing mischief, that good people may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.' Would you then presume thus to pervert the oracles of God? Can you say that the exhortation in 1 Tim. ii. 2 proceeds on the supposition, that civil governors are the parties which you are to pray God to restrain? Does it not rather suppose, what is manifestly true, that the great body of wicked men around you would persecute and destroy you as christians, were they not prevented by the civil power? The exhortation is to intersede *for* kings, and *for* all that are in authority; but this would be interseding *against* them.

Without attachment there is no such thing as *obedience,* whether to parents, husbands, masters, ministers, magistrates, or to God. A disaffected person may abstain from conspiracies, and seditious conversation, from mere prudential motives; but in all this there is not a grain of honour or obedience. He who thinks otherwise, and imagines that an outward compliance with the laws is all that ought to be required of him, only proves himself to be given up in a great degree to a mind void of judgment. Let such a one ask himself as a father, a husband, a master, or a minister, whether a mere outward compliance with his directions would satisfy him. By the same

* Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Titus. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13—17.

means he may find an answer to all his other objections. What, says an undutiful child, you think, I suppose, every thing is right that my father does. No, you reply, your father is a man like other men, and has his faults; but it is not for you to expose them. He is your father, and you are commanded of God to honour and obey him in all his lawful commands. What, and am I bound to esteem him, and to feel attached to him, when he has all along been my enemy, doing every thing for my hurt. The answer is, such a supposition is as unnatural as it is undutiful. Have you not contracted this prejudice by associating with persons who have an end to answer, by supplanting him in your esteem? For me to esteem or be attached to him, would be the same thing as to be attached to what is wrong. Surely this objection can arise from nothing but perverseness. You know there is no necessity for this, and no one wishes it. You seem to forget that he is your father, and to think of him only as a bad man: but these thoughts arise from your listening to evil counsel, intended for sinister ends to lower him in your estimation. Well, I cannot help it. Such also might be the answer of the worst of beings.

A disaffected heart will lead men to talk of providence, so far as it favours their wishes, but renders them blind to it in every other view. Some have pleaded, that providence has favoured the arms of France, and they have subdued their enemies before them; it is folly therefore to resist them. But if it be true that providence has favoured the military power of France, it is no less true that the naval power of England has been equally favoured, and destined of providence to check the inordinate ambition of our rival and our enemy; and but for this, liberty would find no asylum upon earth. Yet were I a subject of the French government, I should think it my duty, while I experienced its protection, to cherish a sincere attachment, and to pray for its prosperity in all its lawful undertakings, whatever I might think of the private characters of those by whom the government is administered.

I should think it wrong to magnify the faults of such a government, even though I could do it with safety to myself, or to read only those accounts of it which came from a quarter where a systematic opposition was carrying on against it. How much more then ought I to be attached to a legitimate government, under whose protection the church of God, for more than a century, has had opportunity to live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

Surely you cannot account for my imbibing these sentiments, but by supposing that I have learned them from the scriptures. You know me too well, to impute to me a spirit that would cringe to any man. You know also that I have no temporal interest to serve, and no prejudices to gratify. If I have any political predilections, they are on the side of whigism. It is true, I have lately perceived some infidels amongst them giving into a persecuting spirit, against evangelical religion, and have denounced them in my letter to the chairman of the East India Company.* And I should not be surprised to find the greater part of them holding these principles when it comes to the trial: but if it be so, it would be a mortification to me as belonging to the whig interest. On this account, as well as others, I have said nothing against them as a political party, but have contented myself with attacking the principle.

It is a fact which few will doubt, that great numbers are attached to government because they are hired, both in church and state. It is no less a fact, that great numbers are disaffected because they are not hired. I accuse neither the one nor the other by the lump: but who can doubt, that the cause of disaffection in the thousands is, that they are not treated in all respects as their fellow subjects; and that in the present reign especially, the political party which has been used to favour dissenters, and the cause of religious liberty, has been kept out of

* Morris's Memoirs of Mr. Fuller, new edition, pp. 281, 282.

power. This party has even maintained a war, as all parties do, against their opponents. They have their newspapers, by which they give their own representations of every thing done by the other. They are not scrupulous to state things as they are, but as they appear to their own prejudiced and violent minds. If any person forms his ideas according to these statements, he will soon become an inconsiderate partizan, laying aside not only the christian, but the man of sober sense, who views both these parties as aiming to supplant the other; and therefore, though he may hear what both advance, and may think it necessary on the whole that the one should watch the other, yet in forming his own judgment of men and things, will take neither of them for his guide.

PICTURE OF AN ANTINOMIAN.

UNDERSTANDING that a certain preacher, who was reported to be more than ordinarily evangelical, was to deliver a sermon in the town where I reside, and hearing some of my neighbours talk of going to hear "the gospel," I resolved to go too. I thought that I loved the gospel, and felt a concern for my neighbours' welfare: I wished therefore to observe, and form the best judgment I could of what it was to which they applied, with such an emphasis, that revered name.

I arrived, I believe unobserved, just after the naming of the text; and staid, though with some difficulty, till the discourse was ended. I pass over what relates to manner, and also much whimsical interpretation of scripture; and shall now confine my remarks to the substance and drift of the discourse.

There were a few good things delivered, which, as they are stated in the bible, are the support and joy of pious

minds. I thought I could see how these things might please the *real* christian, though, on account of the confused manner of their being introduced, not the *judicious* christian. Pious people enjoy the good things they hear; and being thus employed, they attend not to what is erroneous; or if they hear the words, let them go as points which they do not understand, but which they think the wiser preacher and hearers do.

I cannot give you the plan of the sermon, for the preacher appeared not to have had one. I recollect however, in the course of his harangue the following things. —"Some men will tell you, said he, that it is the duty of men to believe in Christ. These men say, that you must get Christ, get grace, and that of yourselves; convert yourselves, make yourselves new creatures, get the Holy Spirit yourselves, &c." Here he went on with an abundance of misrepresentation and slander, too foul to be repeated.

He asserted, with the highest tone of confidence I ever heard in any place, much less in a pulpit, his own *saintship;* loudly and repeatedly declaiming to this effect—"I must go to glory—I cannot be lost—I am as safe as Christ—all devils, all sins cannot hurt me!" In short, he preached himself, not Christ Jesus the Lord. He was his own theme, I believe, throughout one half at least of his sermon. He went over what he called his *experience,* but seemed to shun the dark part of it; and the whole tended to proclaim what a wonderful man he was. Little of Christ could be seen: he himself stood before him: and when his name did occur, I was shocked at the dishonour which appeared to be cast upon him.

All accurate distinction of character, such as is constantly maintained in the scriptures, vanished before his vociferation. The audience was harangued in a way which left each one to suppose himself included among the blessed. This confusion of character was the ground on which he stood exclaiming, "I am saved—I am in Christ. —I cannot be lost—sins and devils may surround me,

but though I fall and sin, I am safe—Christ cannot let me go—lusts and corruptions may overwhelm me in filth and pollution, as a sea rolling over my head: but all this does not, cannot affect the new man—the new nature is not touched or sullied by this: it cannot sin, because it is born of God—I stand amidst this overwhelming sea unhurt." All this the hearers were told in substance, and persuaded to adopt; and it was sin and unbelief not to do so!

The whole was interspersed with levity, low wit, and great irreverence. On the most solemn subjects of "hell, devils, and damnation," he raved like a billingsgate or blasphemer. On the adorable and amasing names of the ever blessed God, he rallied and sported with such lightness and rant as was truly shocking. This was especially the case in his repeating the words of the prophet Isaiah: Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. The manner in which the sacred name was here used, was highly profane and impious.

On returning from the place, I was affected with the delusion by which some of my neighbours were borne away; crying up the preacher as an oracle, "a bold defender of the gospel." To me his words appear to answer with great exactness, to what is called by the apostle to Timothy, 'profane and vain babbling;' and which, from an accurate observation, Paul declared 'would encrease unto more ungodliness; and would eat as doth a canker,' or gangrene.

Need I ask, Can this be true religion? The effects which it produces, both on individuals and on societies, sufficiently ascertain its nature. It was and is affecting to me to think, what a state the world is in; so few making any profession of serious religion, and so few of those that do, who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. To think of christian congregations, who have heard the word of truth for a number of years,

being carried away with such preaching as this, is humiliating and distressing to a reflecting mind. Alas, how easily men are imposed upon in their eternal concerns! It is not so with them in other things: but here the grossest imposture will go down with applause. Yet why do I thus speak? 'There must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest.'

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. xii. 1. *Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish.*

He and he only that loves the means, loves the end. The means of knowledge are 'instruction' in what is right, and 'reproof' for what is wrong. He who is an enemy to either of these means, is an enemy to the end: and whatever he may pretend to, he deserves not the name of a man, but of a 'brute.'

Ver. 3. *A man shall not be established by wickedness; but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.*

Men are apt to think of gaining their ends by wicked means, but they shall not succeed. In the end their building shall fall; but righteousness will stand at last, when all is said and done.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the righteous are right; but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.*

A righteous man in taking counsel, does not merely consult what will be for his worldly interest, but whether the thing itself be right in the sight of God and man: and as to those who never take this into consideration, though they think they have advantage of an upright man, in that they are not scrupulously confined to rule as he is, yet it is all self-deception. They shall either be disap-

pointed *of* their ends, or disappointed *in* them. 'Do they not err that devise evil? But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.' Chap. xiv. 22.

Chap. xiii. 11. *Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished; but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*

Lightly come, say we, lightly go. What is ill gotten is commonly ill spent. Yea, and not only wealth obtained by injustice, but that also which is obtained by mean and niggardly actions.

Ver. 14. *The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

Place a wise man in the seat of government, and the 'law' he enacts will not be such as shall be grievous to the people, but rather such as shall be a blessing to them, and like a fence to guard the traveller from falling into a pit.

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul; but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.*

The accomplishment of desire is essential to happiness: this is only to be expected in the way of righteousness; but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

Chap. xiv. 2. *He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.*

All our actions, in some respects, have God for their object. Real uprightness is fearing God; and perverseness, by disregarding his authority, is a contempt of God.

Ver. 6. *A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.*

The state and disposition of the heart determine our success in the pursuit of truth. If our enquiries be influenced by a spirit of pride and self-sufficiency, we shall stumble at every thing we meet with: but he who knows his own weakness, and conducts his enquiries with humility, shall find knowledge easy of attainment. 'The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' Psal. xxv. 9.

Ver. 7. *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.*

Silence is the best answer to some persons: disputing with them will be of no use.

Ver. 23. *In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.*

Tell me not of those who *talk* most, but of those who *do* most.

Chap. xxx. 24—28. *There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise. The Ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer: the Conies* are a feeble flock, yet make they their houses in the rocks: the Locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands: the Spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.*

Man is here sent to four of the most diminutive parts of the creation, to learn wisdom from their instinctive sagacity. Each of them is 'little, but exceeding wise.' Vain man would be wise, but it cannot be. Ere he can be wise, he must become a fool. Man is naturally more diminutive in the sight of God, than the smallest insect can be in our sight; and by sin has rendered himself of little account indeed in a moral view. Child of man! Know thine insignificance, and follow the example of these little creatures, who are placed before thee to furnish thee with instruction.

Go to the *ants*, and know in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace, ere they be for ever hid from thine eyes.

Go to the *rabbits*, and learn to trust not in thine own strength, but in the power of omnipotent grace.

Go to the *locusts*, which, without king or commander, preserve the strictest order; and be ashamed, that the best laws, human or divine, are insufficient to prevent thy discords, or preserve moral order in the world.

* The word by some is rendered *mountain mice*.

Go to the *spider*, and observe the slender curtains by which she is surrounded. Hail, rain, or wind, would sweep them all away; beasts of the field would tread them underfoot; birds of the air would seize the inhabitant for their prey. But she avails herself of the abodes of the lord of the creation for a shelter, and even of the sumptuous buildings of the most exalted characters. Learn hence, feeble and despicable as thou art, to trust for safety where alone it can be found; aspire to the heaven of heavens, and lay hold of eternal life.

OLD AGE.

DURING a long life, David had enjoyed many mercies from God, but there was one more which he earnestly desired. 'Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.' Psal. lxxi. 9.

This psalm is supposed to have been written about the time of Absalom's conspiracy. God had cast off his predecessor Saul, and things looked as if he now meant to cast *him* off. His people also seemed disposed, by their joining with Absalom, to cast him off: hence the force of the petition.

Old men do not always put up this petition. If the desires of many of them were put into words, their request would be, that they might save money, retain power, and many other things. Covetousness is particularly the sin of old age. The reason may be, that in early life corruption has a number of channels in which it flows; but in old age these are stopped up, or nearly so, by the decay of natural powers and passions; and hence the whole flows in one or two channels. But these things will soon forsake us, or we must forsake them. The favour and

presence of God should be the object, the supreme object of our desire.

Now there are some peculiar circumstances of old age, which render this blessing necessary.

1. Old age is a time of but little natural enjoyment, as Barzillai acknowledged. 2 Sam. xix. 35. There is the more need therefore for other enjoyments. It is a soil on which that kind of pleasure will not grow, but the joys of religion will, and there may be fruit in old age. Be this therefore our object. Psal. xcii. 14. Isai. xl. 30, 31.

2. It is a time in which the troubles of life are often known to encrease. Many are poor, and can struggle no longer, and so sink under their hardships. Others have families, and live to see their children's miseries; or what, if we fear God, will grieve us more, their evil courses. How fit then is the prayer of David to the lips of those, whose grey hairs are going down with sorrow to the grave. —Others lose their friends by death. Youth is the time for forming connections, which is a source of pleasure; and age, of those connections being dissolved, which is a source of pain. How many poor widows may read this address, who are left in a world of care and sorrow, to serve alone. Does not this prayer fit your lips?—At this period we often have to reap the bitter fruits of the sins of earlier years. Disobedience to parents is often followed by disobedience in children; neglect of family government by family ruin, as in the case of Eli; and criminal indulgences in youth by similar practices among our children. David had his troubles in his younger days, but they were light compared with those which respected Ammon, Tamar, and Absalom. Here impurity and blood re-appeared, and wounded his heart.

3. Old age is a time in which the troubles of life not only encrease, but become less tolerable. Young people will weather the storm, but it is not so with the aged. Pains of mind resemble pains of body; young people will

work them off, but in old people they remain, and are carried to the grave. Jacob had hardships at Padan-aram, the heat by day, and the frost by night; but he forgot them in a little time; not so after having lost his beloved Rachel. A garment was brought to him covered with blood! Is this, or any thing like it, the condition of the reader? So much the more necessary the petition.

4. Old age is a time that ought to command respect, and does so among dutiful children, and all serious christians; but it is often known to be attended with neglect. This is the case especially where they are poor and dependent. It has been the case where public characters have lost their youthful vivacity, and the brilliancy of their talents. In these cases also, how fit is the petition: 'Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth!'

5. It is a period bordering on death and eternity. The enjoyments of life are more than half gone, and the remainder hangs upon a thread more than half broken.

But it may be worth while to enquire, in what cases there are grounds to hope the blessing will be granted.

Not all old men enjoy God's favour and presence. There are some tottering on the grave, who are yet wicked; yea, ripe in wickedness—mercenary, deceitful, crafty, and oppressive. Even those sins which they can no longer act, through a failure in their natural powers, they will recal in their defiled imaginations, and repeat in conversation, to the corrupting of youth. Ah, wicked old man! God will cast you off. Age itself entitles *you* to no respect from man, nor will you find mercy from God. Think particularly of two passages. 'The sinner, a hundred years old, shall be accursed—God shall wound the hairy scalp of him who goeth on still in his trespasses.' Isai. lxv. 20. Psal. lxviii. 21.

Who then shall be found sharers in this blessing?

1. It is certain, if we have been God's servants from our youth, he will not cast us off in old age. David pleaded this, in the 5th and 17th verses of this psalm. 'Oh God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.' How was this truth also verified in the old age and death of Jacob, Moses, Daniel, Paul, and others!

2. Though we should not have been his servants in our youth, yet in old age, even from thence, if we seek him with all our hearts, he will be found of us. He will not reject us even at the eleventh hour.

3. Though you should never have been his servants to this day, but have grown grey under Satan's yoke, and are now a poor miserable creature, just ready to fall into hell: yet if from hence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, he will be found of thee; for the Lord our God is a merciful God; and through the death of Christ he can save thee to the uttermost. If with all your heart you only put up this prayer, 'Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth;' he will not cast you off, but stand your friend when forsaken by the whole world. Deut. iv. 29—31. Heb. vii. 25.

CONSOLATION TO THE AFFLICTED.

The substance of a letter to a friend.

I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. John xiv. 2—4.

If our Saviour had been going to some unknown place, where we must not follow him, we might well be unhappy: but 'whither I go ye know.' It is true we know nothing of a hereafter, beyond what God in his word hath told us: but those lively oracles are a light in a dark place, whose cheering beams pierce the otherwise impervious gloom of futurity. When a dying heathen was asked, whither he was going; he replied, Oh my friends, we know nothing of a hereafter! Such also must have been our answer, but for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. As it is, we know whither our Redeemer is gone. He is gone to his Father, and to our Father; to his God, and to our God. He is gone to mount Sion, the city of the living God; to the innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God the judge of all. Whither he is gone we know, for we have had a foretaste of the bliss. As believers we also are already come to mount Sion. The church below and the church above are only different branches of the same family, so that he who is come to one is come to the other.

But how are we to follow him, unless we 'know the way?' If he 'come and receive us,' he will be our guide. And this is not all: 'the way we know.' Thomas thought he knew not whither his Lord was going, nor the way that led to him: yet he knew his Lord, and believed in

him as the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners. Jesus therefore answered him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life:' knowing me, you know the way to the heavenly world. Yes, we not only know whither our Saviour is gone, but the way that leads to him. The doctrine of the cross, as dear Pearce observed, is the only religion for a dying sinner.

If an affectionate father had resolved to remove to a distant country, he might not take his family with him in the first instance, but might choose to go by himself, to encounter and remove the chief difficulties in the way, and make ready a habitation to receive them. Such in effect was the conduct of our Saviour. 'I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' His passage through the territories of death, was attended with the most dreadful of all conflicts; but having overcome, it renders ours an easy one. Death to us is, Jesus 'coming to receive us to himself.'

The presence of a beloved object is the grand preparative of any place, and that which gives it its principal charm. Such is the preparation of a place in the future world for us. Jesus is there, and that is quite enough. If any thing will operate as a magnet to attract us from earth to heaven, it is the consideration of being 'where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God.' Think what an accession of joy his triumphant entrance must have occasioned through all the heavenly regions, and what a source of uninterrupted bliss his presence affords. What would some societies be, without certain interesting characters, which are in effect the life of them? And what would heaven be without Christ? The zest of all its bliss consists in *his* being there, and this is urged as the grand motive to 'setting our affections on things above.' Col. iii. 1, 2.

There also he will gather together the whole family of heaven and earth. His redemption brings multitudes to

glory, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and every one that enters, adds to the enjoyment. In order to connect us together in the closest bonds of affection, God has so ordained, that both in this world and that which is to come, our blessedness should be bound up with that of each other; in seeing the good of his chosen, rejoicing in the gladness of his nation, and glorying with his inheritance. Hence it follows, that every accession to the heavenly world affords an influx to the enjoyment of its inhabitants. Every one that goes before may be said to contribute to the preparing of the place for them which follow after. The pure river of the water of life, has its origin in the throne of God and of the Lamb; but in its progress it passes through various mediums, which swell its streams, and render it more and more delectable. From the entrance of righteous Abel into the new Jerusalem, to this day, it has been rising higher and higher, and will continue to do so till all the nations of the saved are gathered together.

Christ prepares a place for us, in superintending the concerns of the universe, and causing all events to work together and produce the highest ultimate good. Glory awaits the righteous immediately upon their departure from the body, but a much greater glory is in reserve. Innumerable events in the system of providence must remain inexplicable, till the mystery of God be finished. It is impossible for spectators to comprehend the use of all the parts of a complicate machine, till it is constructed and put into motion. And as our Forerunner is now preparing the scenery of this grand exhibition, and hastening it to its desired issue, it is thus that he is preparing a place for us.

From hence we are encouraged to be looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, and directed to consider it as the period when we shall be fully 'satisfied.' How solemn, and yet how sweet, is the description of it. 'The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of

God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.' A 'shout' perhaps denotes the universal joy of heaven, for the arrival of the day when the war is terminated in victory, and the last enemy is destroyed. The blowing of a 'trumpet' may probably allude to that of the jubilee, on which the prison doors were thrown open, and the captives set at liberty. Such were the consolations presented to the Thessalonians, on the death of their christian friends.

Our Lord did not absolutely forbid his apostles to weep at his departure: he himself wept at the grave of Lazarus: but he dissuaded them from *excessive* grief. 'Let not your heart be troubled.' I think that I never felt what may be called heart trouble, or deep distress, for the loss of any person, however near to me, whose death I considered merely as a removal to the church above. The words of our Saviour are here applicable. 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father: for my Father is greater than I.' That is, the glory I go to possess with my Father is greater than any thing I could inherit upon earth; and therefore, if ye loved me, and your love operated in a proper way, you would rather be glad for my sake, than sorry for your own.

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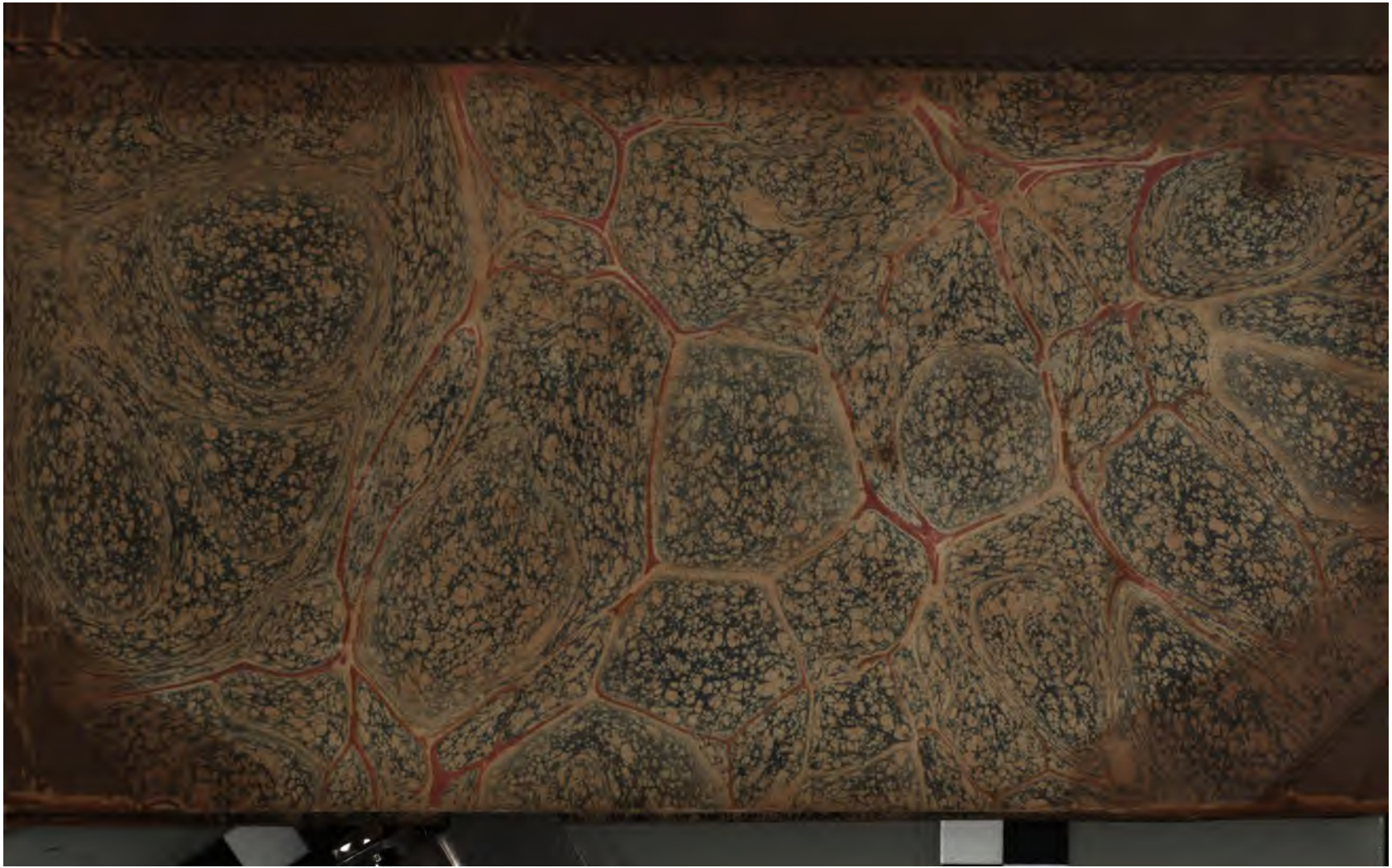
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